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ABSTRACT

Seven essays address aspects of English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) instruction for children, seen from a variety of perspectives: research, teaching, and ethnography. They include: "Introduction: Children and ESL" (D. Scott Enright, Pat Rigg); "ESL Teachers as Language Advocates for Children" (Courtney Cazden); "ESL Children's Writing: What We've Learned, What We're Learning" (Sarah Hudelson); "Reading in ESL: Learning from Kids" (Pat Rigg); "A Children's Story" (Carole Urzua); "'Use Everything You Have To Teach English': Providing Useful Input to Young Language Learners" (D. Scott Enright); and "Endnote: Integrating Perspectives" (Pat Rigg, D. Scott Enright). All papers contain references. (MSE)

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# Children and ESL:

# INTEGRATING PERSPECTIVES

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Edited by Pat Rigg and D. Scott Enright



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# Children and ESL: Integrating Perspectives

Edited by

Pat Rigg

and

D. Scott Enright

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# Introduction: Children and ESL

The title of this book – Children and ESL: Integrating Perspectives – indicates both the intended audience and the purpose. We are writing to those who are involved with children who are developing English as another language in classroom settings: that is, we are writing to classroom teachers, both mainstream and ESL, to those who educate classroom teachers, and to those who study teachers and children working together. The purpose of the volume is to bring together views of quite different scholars, to integrate quite different perspectives. This integration is possible because all of us contributing here share certain theoretical beliefs.

The first of our shared beliefs is that children who are developing English are not "language disabled" or "limited" in any way. We all think ESL children bring to school a rich heritage of cultural and linguistic knowledge, a knowledge of "ways with words" (Heath, 1983) which can and should be used both to assist the children in their ESL development and to enrich the experience of every classroom member. Each paper suggests how this rich heritage is expressed and dealt with, positively or negatively, in school.

The second of our shared beliefs is that language is best taught and is best studied when its holistic nature is recognized. We see language as a whole, not as a collection of skills called listening, speaking, reading, and writing. When we focus on writing (as Hudelson and Urzúa do) or on reading (as Rigg and Urzúa do), or on talking (as Enright does), we clearly indicate that these processes are not separate language processes, but are aspects of a unitary whole. Typical schoolroom fragmentation of language, such as word lists or spelling patterns, destroys that wholeness; such fragmentation results in exercises about language, but not in language use or in language development.

We know that language is always embedded in context. *Context* means more than the physical setting: it also includes the social and psychological settings, the perceptions the individual has of the situation and of the expectations others have. As teachers and researchers, the authors in this volume recognize some of the practical limitations of trying to identify the many contexts in which language develops, but they also believe that unless context is taken into account, both teaching and research suffer.

Last, all of the authors in this volume believe that language develops from children's needs to communicate, needs that involve a variety of purposes in a variety of settings. The authors agree that the classroom is only a small part of the world in which there is always a reason for people to speak to others and to pay attention to what others are saying, to write to others and to read what others have written. The authors use authenticity as a touchstone. Language used authentically is language used for the speaker's and listener's or reader's and writer's own purposes; it is not fragments of language displayed by students for the teacher's or school's purposes. Of course, all of these authors recognize that often the students' purposes coincide with the teachers' and schools'. The authors question classroom activities which require display of language rather than language use. They also question the assumption that the whole of language and literacy can be broken down and taught in isolated parts. Within this generally holistic perspective on language, each author examines in a different way how children develop ESL.

*Overview of Chapters*

All of the papers in this collection come from presentations at TESOL '85 in New York City. Courtney Cazden's paper is the written version of her plenary address — ESL Teachers as Language Advocates for Children. The papers by Sarah Hudelson, Pat Rigg, and Carole Urzúa are based on their TESOL colloquium – Children and ESL: What We've Learned and What We're Learning. D. Scott Enright's paper — Use Everything You Have to Teach English — is part of that colloquium and is also part of a larger ethnographic study he is conducting.

Cazden's perspective is that of a researcher investigating child language development in schools. Cazden asks ESL teachers to be language advocates for children, to help them overcome three major barriers to educational opportunity and subsequent educational success. Cazden defines these three barriers as (a) reductionist concepts of language and learning, (b) inadequate responses to cultural differences, and (c) inadequate communication among the adults responsible for these children's education. After discussing how each of these barriers blocks second language learners' access to educational opportunity, Cazden gives examples of school and community activities that extend rather than restrict children's language development and education. Her paper is a plea for help and a call for action.

The papers by Hudelson, Rigg, and Urzúa (chapters 3, 4, and 5) form a unit. They are based on data drawn from the same group of four Southeast Asian children who had been enrolled in elementary schools

in the U.S. for two years. Hudelson examines the writing of these children; Rigg examines their reading; and Urzúa gives an overall view of the various contexts in which these children learn.

Hudelson's perspective is that of a teacher of Spanish-speaking children in a bilingual program and of a researcher interested especially in the literacy development of bilingual children. Her paper (chapter 3) reviews the relevant research on children's writing development from both first and second language studies. She synthesizes the major findings of that research and establishes a theoretical foundation which she subsequently uses for her own analysis. The major findings listed by Hudelson are these: (a) all second language learners can write in the second language even though they are not yet proficient in the language (by *writing*, Hudelson means the creation of a message for an authentic audience, not copying or making up sentences from assigned words); (b) second language learners, like first language learners, create different texts for different purposes; and (c) the contexts in which writing occurs affect that writing, both the specific piece of writing and the long-term development of writing.

From this theoretical perspective Hudelson examines writing samples from the four Southeast Asian children. Her examination indicates some of what a teacher or researcher can learn about a child's development of English, especially of English composition, by looking at several compositions, and it indicates how misleading the examination of only one composition can be. One of Hudelson's conclusions is that when these children write for their own purposes, rather than to fulfill a teacher's assignment, they "write stories that could be read and enjoyed."

Rigg's perspective is that of both a teacher of adult ESL students and a researcher in first and second language literacy. Her paper, "Reading in ESL: Learning from Kids," reports a miscue study carried out with the same four Southeast Asian children reported on by Hudelson and Urzúa in this volume. The basic questions Rigg addresses here are: how are these children reading? and how readable are the materials that they are asked to read? After presenting a psycholinguistic view of the reading process, Rigg reviews the miscue studies which have been done with ESL children; she then briefly refers to the research in schema theory which is relevant to her study. The study itself uses the *Reading Miscue Inventory* (Goodman & Burke, 1972) to analyze the reading of two texts by each of the four children. To explain some of the results of the miscue analysis, Rigg analyzes the texts used; this analysis is prefaced with a discussion of readability. The paper closes with implications for instruction and for research.

Urzúa uses a folk tale schema to report the quest of a researcher who set out to learn about the second language development of four chil-

dren from Southeast Asia, only to find that the answer to her research question – how are they learning English? – was a whole new set of questions, not only about the children, but also about research. Urzúa drew data from a variety of sources: she observed the children in both regular and ESL classes, and at their homes; she talked with them, listened to them, examined what they read and what they wrote. Working closely with Hudelson and Rigg, Urzúa pulls together their analyses of the children's writing and reading, and integrates it with her firsthand knowledge of the children, their classes, and their community. Her paper demonstrates best the integration of perspectives that is the central theme of this book. Urzúa's major conclusion is that researchers and teachers need to gather a great deal of information from a variety of sources at a variety of times about the children with whom they work.

Chapter 6 is Enright's "Use Everything You Have to Teach English." Enright's perspective is that of an ethnographer concerned with how classroom interaction contributes to language and conceptual development. His paper describes how an intern in a summer TESL program adapted both her views of teaching and her teaching itself, in order to meet the needs of her second language students. His paper addresses two questions: what can I do in my own classroom? and what sort of data is available to a researcher in a classroom? His detailed description of each technique that the teacher developed is an example of how teachers can adapt their language and their curriculum. This same description is an example of the insights that may be generated by using teachers' and students' own perceptions in examining their teaching and learning.

The last chapter, "Integrating Perspectives," by Rigg and Enright synthesizes the major points of the preceding six chapters. The authors give a lengthy illustration of the practices of one teacher who demonstrates advocacy of the sort Cazden discussed. This teacher, like Enright's Molly, uses everything she has. She and her students use speaking, writing, and reading authentically. Instead of studying about language, they use language to find out more about themselves and about the world, because they know that using language for communication and investigation develops language.

Rigg and Enright point out that this ideal teacher is also a researcher. They indicate some of the ways in which researchers and teachers, if they are not the same person, can work together, so that both are enriched.

D. Scott Enright

Pat Rigg

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## Contributors

Courtney B. Cazden is Professor of Education at Harvard University's Graduate School of Education. She has worked extensively with native English-speaking and ESL children as both a researcher and as a classroom teacher. Her books and articles, especially *Functions of Language in the Classroom* (Teachers College Press, 1972), have become standard references in teacher education.

D. Scott Enright is Associate Professor of Early Childhood Education, Educational Foundations, and ESL at Georgia State University in Atlanta. A former teacher of bilingual kindergarten through second grade, he now studies and teaches about classroom language use.

Sarah Hudelson has taught children in bilingual and ESL programs, and has taught graduate and undergraduate students in TESL and bilingual programs in Arizona and Florida. She is the author of several articles on children's literacy development, of *Learning to Read in Different Languages* (Center for Applied Linguistics,1981), and of *Hopscotch* (Regents, 1984), an EFL/ESL series for elementary children.

Pat Rigg is a consultant in American language and literacy. She has taught ESL to both adults and children, and has taught in TESL programs in the United States and abroad. Her publications deal with both ESL and first language literacy; her best known is "Beginning to Read in English, the LEA Way" (Indiana University, 1981).

Carole Urzúa is Assistant Professor of Bilingual Education at the University of the Pacific in Stockton, California. She has taught children in bilingual settings both in the United States and in the Philippines. She speaks and writes extensively about her major interest – young children's language development. She is the author of *Talking Purposefully* (Institute of Modern Languages, 1981).

# ESL Teachers as Language Advocates for Children

Courtney B. Cazden
Harvard University

# ESL Teachers as Language Advocates for Children

As ESL teachers, your attention is usually focused on what you do – or might do – while you are directly teaching English to your students. I am not writing about that part of your professional life, important as it obviously is. Instead I want to focus on experiences your students have when they are *not* with you, and ask you to assume some responsibility there too. Admittedly, I am asking already busy people to take on added concerns. Let me explain why I think the need is so great, and why you can provide such special help.

As you know, the report on education sponsored by the federal government in 1983 is called *A Nation at Risk*. A less well-known and more grass-roots report, sponsored by the National Coalition of Advocates for Students, was issued in 1985. It is called *Barriers to Excellence: Our Children at Risk* (National Coalition of Advocates for Students, 1985). This report is based on hearings held in 10 cities around the U.S. at which teachers, parents, other educators and lay citizens testified about barriers to excellence that put particular groups of children at very high risk – risk of failure and risk of dropping out of school. There is a large overlap between the groups of children most at risk and the children you teach. The overlap is not complete; many of the children at risk are children from poor, native English-speaking families, and some of the children you teach will be academically successful. But the overlap is substantial, and it is on the barriers to excellence that exist within the educational system for those children that I want to focus attention.

As Christina Paulston continually reminds us, school language policies cannot by themselves determine the outcomes of language gain and language loss. But as professionals, we have to fight against barriers to educational achievements, and for the most positive learning environments, whatever the medium of instruction.

Of course, you may be thinking, but why am I adding to your burdens in this way? Because you have special knowledge and special expertise with respect to the conditions for language learning and the conditions for successful communication across differences of culture as well. No one else does, not to the same extent – not most classroom teachers, not other specialists, and not school principals who should otherwise be expected to assume responsibility for the learning en-

vironments in their schools. Because of your special knowledge, you can play a special role.

And so I am asking you to be "language advocates for children" – advocates beyond the walls of your own ESL and bilingual education classrooms. Other possible names for your work come to mind. Someone quipped that applied linguists (as we all are) are parish priests who minister to the flock, while linguist theologians reflect on matters of theory. Others consider all teachers as street-level bureaucrats who effectively create policy in the process of implementing it. But advocacy seems to me the most accurate label for the role I am asking you to play.

There are many barriers to excellence for language-minority children in our schools today. I'll talk about only three that I hope you can address in your work:

> First, reductionist concepts of language and learning implicit in the mainstream curriculum;
>
> Second, cultural differences that may build barriers to excellence even higher; and
>
> Third, inadequate communication among the many adults in these children's lives.

More about each of these barriers in turn.

### Reductionist Concepts of Language and Learning

As you must know, maximizing students' time-on-task is widely advertised these days as a prescription for all our educational ills. Unfortunately, the nature of the tasks don't get nearly as much attention as the amount of time. They deserve far more attention, particularly because of the influence on the curriculum of multiple-choice tests.

Because of the power of standardized, multiple-choice tests as evaluations of children and thereby of teachers, many of the curriculum tasks assigned to children are designed to be similar to items on those tests. Norman Frederiksen, a senior researcher at the Educational Testing Service, writes of what he calls "the real test bias," that is, the influence of tests on teaching and learning:

> If educational tests fail to represent the spectrum of knowledge and skills that ought to be taught, they may introduce bias against teaching important skills that are not measured. In view of the increasing influence of standardized tests in education, such bias may be substantial . . .
>
> Improvement in basic skills is of course much to be desired,

> and the use of tests to achieve that outcome is not to be condemned. My concern, however, is that reliance on objective tests to provide evidence of improvement may have contributed to a bias in education that decreases effort to teach other important abilities that are difficult to measure with multiple-choice tests. A recent NAEP [National Assessment of Educational Progress, 1982] report suggests that there is such a bias. The NAEP report shows that over the past decade performance on items measuring "basic skills" is not declining, but there has been a decrease on items that reflect more complex skills. ...There are, of course, many possible causes of the changes in performance on the NAEP tests, but the possibility must be considered that the mandated use of minimum competency tests, [and other standardized achievement tests] which use the multiple-choice format almost exclusively, may have discouraged the teaching of abilities that cannot easily be measured with multiple-choice items (1984, pp. 193, 195).

The danger of "reductionism" – fractionating complex tasks into component parts that, no matter how well practiced, can never reconstitute the complex whole – applies to all education today. But it must be of special concern where language learning is a significant educational goal. British researchers who did a case study of one bilingual school in Boston comment:

> The transitional mandate grips the curriculum in an educationally reductionist vice. It is not just that the acquisition of English language skills dominates the activities of teachers and pupils alike but that the very definition and pursuit of those skills is constrained by narrow interpretation of legislative intent. The result is a largely behaviorist pedagogy [in which] language is divorced from its cultural contexts of meaning and use, componentized and taught as abstraction. This is arguably the most difficult way yet devised to promote literacy and the least responsive to the student's cultural resources (MacDonald, Adelman, Kushner & Walker, 1982, pp. 244-245).

An historical discussion of the same bias is presented by anthropologist and social historian, Shirley Brice Heath, and high-school English teacher, Amanda Branscombe, drawing on Calhoun's historical analysis (1970) in *The Intelligence of a People*:

> From an historical examination of how American intelligence changed between 1750 and the mid-twentieth

> century, Calhoun believes that "intelligence is first of all a kind of social relation" (Calhoun, p. 28), and argues that throughout the history of American schooling, teachers and tests judge the mental capacity of students on the basis of their performance as communicator and audience. Yet, the varieties of ways in which students could learn to respond as communicator and audience decreased sharply after 1870, when schools began to place more and more emphasis on standardized written tests as measures of intelligence. Performance of disjointed skills replaced earlier emphases on holistic conceptions of communicator and audience. Levels of testing teased apart certain areas of competence in communicating, but left concealed ways of blending these to achieve the whole: an "audience community" (Calhoun, p. 340) sharing experiences through oral and written communication . . . Through mechanistic linguistic tasks, such as spelling tests and grammar drills, schools claim to impart communication skills. Yet, the academic discourse forms which lie at the heart of success in the higher levels of schooling – oral and written extended prose, sequenced explanations, and logical arguments – rarely receive explicit identification and discussion.
>
> What can schools do? Are there ways the school can improve the communicator-audience relations of students and thus advance the "intelligence" – i.e. the social-relation capacity – of those who have been judged by previous measures of school intelligence to be inferior or unacceptable communicators and audiences?
> (in shortened form from Heath & Branscombe, 1985)

What can schools do? Heath and Branscombe describe the letter-writing in Branscombe's classroom between her 9th grade Basic English students (many of whom had been in special education classes most of their school lives) and her 11th and 12th grade students in a higher track General English class. In her plenary address to TESOL '84, Heath (1985) describes the progress of Branscombe's students and also the progress of LES students in another letter writing program.[1] Another kind of letter writing between students and their teacher called dialogue journals has also been successful with hearing-impaired students (Staton, 1985a, b) and with other second language learners (Kreeft, Shuy, Staton, Reed & Morroy, 1984).

In a content area, rather than language arts, a set of elementary science materials, *Find Out/Descubrimiento* (Linguametrics Group, n.d.) that require small group problem-solving and discussion have

been developed by Edward de Avila, author of the LAS language proficiency test, and sociologist Elizabeth Cohen.

Additional examples come from case studies of three effective Spanish-English bilingual schools in California located and studied by Carter and Maestas (1982) at the request of the California State Department of Education. Carter and Maestas specifically mention activities that counter the curriculum reductionism of isolated skill practice: writing plays that are then videotaped for continued instructional use; stocking a complete bilingual school library; and displaying a wealth of children's writings in both languages on the school walls.

A barrier for children at risk that is closely related to this problem of reductionism is the differential distribution and use of the latest educational innovation - computers. I am currently engaged in research with colleagues on how computers are used for writing instruction in two sixth grade inner-city classrooms in which about half the students are of Portugese background, many mainstreamed alumni/ae of the school's Portugese/English bilingual program. As a group, we are concerned about the effects of computers on existing barriers: do they decrease or increase existing inequalities (Michaels, Cazden & Bruce, 1985)?

In principle, computers can make educational resources more equitably distributed through network access to data bases, library resources and even the writing of other children. For example, through the Northeast Bilingual Education Support Center connected with the University of Hartford, limited English-speaking (LES) children are in correspondence with children around the world: California, Alaska, Hawaii, Japan, Israel and Mexico (D. Sayers, personal communication, May 12, 1985). Unfortunately, such potential use of computers is too often unrealized. As is so often the case with new technology, computers are more apt to be used for old functions, and to reinforce existing patterns rather than change them.

First, with respect to the availability of the hardware itself, study after study has found a substantial inequality in computer/student ratios among categories of schools. Urban schools with a high proportion of poverty-level and LES/NES students have fewer computers than either suburban or rural schools.

Second, even if urban schools were to catch up in number of computers owned, inequalities also exist in the type of software being used. Published research on this issue has focused on math and science software, not language arts. For example, the Rand Corporation studied 60 California classrooms that were nominated as exemplary computer users (Shavelson, Winkler, Stasz, Feibel, Robyn & Shaha, 1984). Classrooms that had more students high in ability and fewer students from minority language backgrounds used many different kinds of software, all orchestrated into the regular curriculum. The five class-

rooms with the highest percentage of minority students, on the other hand, used the computer only for isolated drill and practice. I don't know of a comparable study of the distribution of language arts software. But I infer from many informal reports that language minority students are more apt to do drill and practice on spelling, punctuation and correct English usage, and less apt to have the chance to write with word processing software like *Bank Street Writer* or *Quill*.

This inequality in software availability cannot be explained by matters of budgets and per-pupil expenditures alone. True, holistic computer writing requires a printer where reductionist drill and practice does not. But I suspect that the stronger reason is a misconception about language learning, and about the kinds of experiences that build the "intelligence of a people". We know that language is not learned by building up from sounds to words to phrases to sentences to larger text, each level practiced 'til perfect as prerequisite to the next. Yet that sequence is implicit in the only possible justification for denying the children we teach the opportunity to write, and exchange, real texts. Such denial suggests the operation in practice of two theories of language learning – to put the matter bluntly, one for the rich and one for the poor. (See also, Smith, 1984). Your expertise and your advocacy are sorely needed on this point.

## Cultural Differences

The second barrier for our children at risk are the ways to which differences in culture as well as language are responded.

While TESOL was meeting in New York City in April, 1985, a full-length biography of New Zealand primary teacher, Sylvia Ashton-Warner, received its world premiere a block away at the Museum of Modern Art. Entitled *Sylvia*, and based on her autobiographical books, *Teacher* (1963) and *I Passed This Way* (1979), it recounts her experiences in a two room school for Maori children in rural New Zealand – similar in indigenous minority children and colonial-type administration to the Bureau of Indian Afairs schools for Native American children in the United States in the same era. Books and film tell the story of one woman's advocacy of using children's own words as beginning reading texts. Instead of imported basal readers:

See Janet, Mother.
Janet can run.
Janet can jump.

Ashton-Warner wrote down her children's "key words":

canoe, knife, kiss, etc.

and made beautifully illustrated books out of them.

More recently, in *On TESOL '82: Pacific Perspectives*, Cathie Jordan (1983) from Hawaii describes the classroom adaptations developed at the Kamehameha Early Education Program (KEEP) that have dramatically improved the achievement of Hawaiian children of Polynesian descent – adaptations that include peer collaboration in learning centers organized for practice of academic skills, and voluntary participation instead of strictly enforced turn-taking during teacher-led reading lessons.

Creating new reading texts or reorganizing the classroom social structure may seem large tasks. But there are subtler cultural barriers that perhaps you as language advocates for children can help mainstream teachers reduce.

For example, a Latin American student in my course on classroom discourse has been observing in a Spanish/English bilingual program. In her journal, the student (whom I will call V) has commented on two aspects of the Hispanic children's behavior: cultural differences in naming conventions and in narrative style, and the non-Hispanic teacher's response.

About naming conventions, she writes:

> On my third visit in early November, I recorded the following exhange between the teacher and a Puerto Rican pupil:
>
> P. (sitting at his desk) Teacher, teacher, come here.
>
> T. (who was at the other side of the room helping other children) There are no teachers in this room, we all have names!
>
> P. (looked at the teacher quite puzzled, then looks down and continues his work and did not attempt to seek the teacher's attention again.)
>
> I recorded a similar exchange between the same student and the teacher on several other occasions. By the end of the month, the student seemed to have finally learned the rule, since he stopped calling her "Teacher." Interestingly, however, he has continued to call the Spanish teacher who works with the children in the afternoon "Maestra," and when he wants my attention, he also addresses me as "Maestra."

V goes on to explain cultural differences in naming conventions from her own experience growing up in South America:

> This boy attended school in Puerto Rico for several years before moving to the U.S. [Here] it seems to be more common to call one's primary and elementary school

> teachers Mr. or Ms. X, X usually being the teacher's *last* name. In Latin American countries, however, it is more common to refer to one's teacher as "Teacher," and only sometimes Mr. or Ms. X, X always being the teacher's *first* name.

About the organization of narratives, V writes from her observations in this same classroom:

> In March, the children had been asked to write a story about bubbles, after blowing bubbles and talking about their particular features. After the children had gone home, the teacher asked me, "Did you notice that Manuel's story (a Hispanic boy) had a beginning, middle and an end? I really liked that story." When I commented that I had also liked Diego's story (another Hispanic boy), she said that the problem with his story was that he kept diverging from the topic of the story (i.e. bubbles) to mention how he played and blew bubbles with his friends. She added that she did not understand why the children always had to include their mother, their siblings, or their friends in every story they wrote.
>
> From my own experience of growing up in a Latin American country, it seems quite likely that the Hispanic children's narratives about significant personal events would reflect the importance of interactions with family and friends. For example, in my family and my husband's, children interact on a daily basis not only with their parents and siblings, but also with their aunts, uncles, cousins and grandparents. If a family member such as a grandparent or an aunt was not present during an important event, the child is often asked to inform that person about the particular event that occurred. In this way a child is constantly sharing his personal experiences as well as receiving comments and reactions from a large number of people. Thus, when asked to talk about significant personal events, either orally or in writing, the child is faced with the difficult task of conveying an event that is embedded in a complex context of related episodes. Talking or writing about an event without alluding to those interactions would be impossible for a young Hispanic child, because it is this complex context that provides meaning. For a teacher, on the other hand, a young child's attempt to tell a narrative about an important event by including the different reactions or responses he or she received from different family members will probably not seem adequate.

These are examples of cultural differences that were understood by a sensitive observer who is herself an insider to the children's culture. I realize that you and the mainstream teachers in your schools are working with an increasingly diverse student group. Knowing such specific information about each cultural group is impossible. But I hope you can find ways, as sociolinguistically knowledgeable language advocates, to help teachers be empathetic and at least give culturally different children the benefit of the doubt.

## Communication Among Adults

A third barrier to excellence for language minority children is caused by the number of different teachers in the children's lives, and the inadequate communication among the teachers and with the parents.

This problem first came to my attention through the Boston area research of Linda Ventriglia, author of *Conversations of Miguel and Maria* (1982). Her project, not reported in that book, was designed as both research and in-service education.[2] It focused on curriculum discountinuities, and the "open hostility" reported by one principal, among native-language teachers, ESL teachers, and mainstream English teachers at the same and subsequent grades. Observations in two schools in different cities, carried out in part by the teachers themselves under the guidance of the researcher, found two kinds of discontinuities.

First, children faced different demands for language use: whereas teacher objectives in the native language classrooms were balanced between cognitive and affective/social objectives (53% vs. 47%), objectives in the English classrooms were more heavily cognitive (86% vs. 14%); and in the ESL classrooms, which were supposed to bridge the native language and English environments, the predominance of cognitive objectives was the highest of all (96%). A second discontinuity was found in the extent of student initiation of teacher-student interaction: it was much more common in L1 classrooms than in either ESL or regular English classrooms. It is not possible from this study to say which are the preferred patterns, but it is hard to justify such discrepancies.

In addition to these discontinuities, the study found evidence of redundance of questionable value: the same concept or skill was being taught all over again in the three settings.

The fact that this study was conducted in two different schools, and that the patterns were the same in Chinese, Spanish, Portugese and Haitian programs, suggests that these patterns may be widespread. What is needed, and what developed in this project, is deliberately arranged communication among teachers who are, or will be, teaching

the same children. In the schools in this project, it took an outside researcher to bring the three groups of teachers together in reciprocal observations and shared curriculum planning. It should be possible for ESL teachers as language advocates for children to play that integrating role. Without such integration, children's education will be limited not by their abilities or their language, but by the invisible walls between teachers built by categorical funding and separate professional worlds.

High as these walls between teachers are, the walls between teachers and parents are often even higher. In the two sixth grade classrooms in our computer writing project, we have wondered about how easily the Portugese children would shift from a traditional, rural based culture at home to the new world of computers at school. This particular problem seemed to be more in our heads than the children's. Some of the girls who led the most protected and restricted lives at home, learning how to sew Portugese lace from their grandmothers after school, became computer experts at school.

But some conflicts between home and school may be, or may become, more serious than matters of naming conventions and narrative style. For example, one Portugese boy, Carlos, works nights at his uncle's restaurant. The research observer in his classroom tells the story:

> Carlos may turn out to be one of the teacher's (T) success stories for this school year. His family are recent immigrants from Portugal who speak only Portugese at home. When he first came into her class he was labeled a "psychological pullout," and during the first few weeks of school showed little interest in school and a tendency to disrupt the kids with whom he was sitting by constant teasing. T increased the amount of personal attention she gave him, especially in writing. She began to allow him to write about whatever he wanted and to spend his free time in the room learning about the computer. His language skills have improved dramatically. According to T, he has become a respected peer-teacher for his classmates, and has not been involved in confrontation with T since mid-fall. In a recent interview he spoke of wanting to get a job some day as a newspaper man because he likes to write.
>
> But T is worried about him. He works four days a week from 5 p.m. to 2 a.m. at his uncle's restaurant washing dishes. She is aware that he enjoys the comaraderie of working with his family. He especially enjoys working with his uncle who acts in place of his father who left his mother several years ago.

> and whom Carlos seldom sees. T is concerned because she senses that at this moment Carlos lives in two distinct worlds, each having its separate attractions. She is afraid that Carlos will have to choose between emotional sustenance of his family and educational success as she and the school define it.

One ESL teacher mentioned during TESOL '85 that she regularly visits her students at home and keeps in touch with all her families. This has never been a common public school practice. Yet a recent comparison of more and less successful working-class students in 2-7 grades (Snow et al., in press) showed that frequency of parent-teacher contact – whether initiated by parent or teacher – correlated significantly with student gains in reading during the school year. Language and cultural differences magnify the usual home/school distance and keep the two worlds further apart, leaving it to young children to traverse the distance by themselves.

A glance through the TESOL '85 program suggests that working on home/school relationships is not a high priority concern. In suggesting that ESL teachers can contribute here, I am not suggesting that you should be advocates for English, urging immigrant parents to shift to English at home, as the nun of an earlier era did in Richard Rodriguez's *Hunger of Memory* (1982). The role I am urging is not advocates for English, but language and culture advocates for children.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, let me remind you again of the three barriers to excellence and equity I have discussed:

> reductionist conceptions of language learning implicit in the curriculum, including computer software selection;
>
> cultural differences between teacher expectations and child socialization;
>
> inadequate communication among school adults and between school and home.

Big problems. You can't solve them alone. But you are, I believe, uniquely qualified to help because of your understandings of how language is learned, and how it can be used in developing the intelligence of all our children.

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## Footnotes

[1]All of Branscombe's ninth graders passed competency tests at the end of the year and all but two went on to graduate from high school (personal communication, July, 1985).

[2]Gonzalez (1983, pp. 30-41) gives a brief report, unfortunately, without Ventriglia's name.

# ESL Children's Writing: What We've Learned, What We're Learning

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# ESL Children's Writing: What We've Learned, What We're Learning

The last 10 to 15 years have been an exciting period for those of us involved in language education, from the perspectives of both oral language and literacy development. In the area of literacy, researchers, caretakers and teachers, often working together, have learned a tremendous amount about the processes of reading and writing, about how preschoolers and children in elementary school classrooms develop as readers and writers. Many examinations of children's writing (writing defined here as the creation of an original work or piece, not as copying or creating sentences from word lists) have considered native speakers of English (e.g., Bissex, 1979; Britton, Burgess, Martin, McLeod & Rosen, 1975; Calkins, 1983; Dyson, 1982; Graves, 1982; Harste, Burke & Woodward, 1984). Others have studied (sometimes with a view to documenting universals in literacy acquisition) children's writing development in native languages other than English (e.g., Edelsky, 1982; Ferreiro, 1983; Ferreiro & Teberosky, 1979; Hudelson, 1981-82). In addition, researchers concerned with the language growth of children who come to our schools either as non-English speakers or with limited English proficiency, have considered the development of writing in English as a second language (ESL) (e.g., Edelsky, 1981a, 1981b, 1982; Goodman, 1984; Hudelson, 1984a, 1984b; Kreeft, 1984; Urzúa, 1985). Research methodologies have included the collection and analysis of written products (Edelsky, 1981a; Ferreiro, 1983; Kreeft, Shuy, Stanton, Reed & Morroy, 1984); the documentation and description of classroom contexts for writing through participant observation, field notes and interviews with teachers and children (Calkins, 1983; Goodman, 1984; Graves, 1982); and analysis of audio and videotape recordings of writing sessions, including adult-child and child-child interactions during writing (Calkins, 1983; Graves, 1982; Hudelson, 1984a). As we have studied, as we have taught, and as we have watched children grapple with and try to make sense of reading and writing in a language that they may not fully control, we have seen that just as there are many similarities between first and second language oral language development; there are also many similarities when we consider literacy, including in children's development of the writing process.

Zamel (1984) has demonstrated that research into the second lan-

guage composing processes of adults corroborates much of what has been learned about adults' composing in their native language. This paper begins with a review of several findings about children's development as writers in English as a second language, findings which also parallel generalizations about children's writing development in a first language. These findings will then provide the framework for an examination of some pieces written by four ESL children.

## What We've Learned

*Finding 1.*

Child ESL learners and children of limited English-speaking ability can compose in their second language before they have "mastered" that language, before they have total control over the systems of English. The term *systems* refers not only to the phonological, syntactic and lexical systems, but also to aspects of the written language such as orthography, segmentation, capitalization and punctuation. Examination of the written products of child second language learners make it clear that second language learners make use of whatever knowledge they have of the systems of English at a given point in time, and they use this knowledge to hypothesize about how to write in English (Ammon, 1985; Edelsky, 1981a, 1981b; Hudelson, 1983; Kreeft, 1984). Some children utilize their knowledge of their native language and apply that to English (Edelsky, 1982). Younger writers often employ drawing as well as graphic forms to solve their problems of expression (Hudelson, 1984a). In general, as children learn more English and learn more about the systems of the written language, this control is reflected in their writing, and their writing more closely resembles standard English.

*Finding 2.*

Second language learners can create different kinds of texts for different purposes, in response to a variety of classroom activities, what some would call writing across the curriculum. In categorizing the writing of native speakers of English, Britton and his colleagues (Britton, 1970; Britton et al., 1975) have identified three broad categories of writing. These are expressive writing, where the focus is on individual revelation of feelings and personal identity; poetic or literary writing, where the focus is on the creation of a literary work (e.g., a riddle, a poem, a story); and transactional writing, where the aim is to present information clearly and convey a message to the reader through reporting, explanation, argumentation, persuasion, speculation, drawing

conclusions and so on. The same categories may be used to consider writing collected from classes of ESL children (Hudelson, 1985).

The use of journals has been documented as a way of moving limited English-speakers into Britton's first major type of writing — expressive writing. Of particular interest has been the use of dialogue or interactive journals, in which students and teacher carry on a written conversation as the teacher responds in writing to each child's daily journal entry. Investigators from the Center for Applied Linguistics (Kreeft et al., 1984; Staton, Shuy & Kreeft, 1982) examined dialogue journals from a California public school classroom populated by both native English speakers and ESL children. They found that the ESL children, from a variety of language backgrounds and with varied English abilities, were able to engage in journal writing, albeit with differing levels of involvement and with differing purposes. The children used their journals for such varied purposes as commenting on activities they liked and didn't like, asking and answering the teacher's questions, expressing fears and inadequacies, seeking reassurance and explaining things they didn't understand. The teacher, responding to the children's topics, became counselor, clarifier, questioner, confidant and collaborator, as well as serving as a model of standard written English. The researchers concluded that interactive journal writing promoted the ESL children's abilities to use written English and reflected their growing abilities to use English (Farr, 1982; Kreeft, 1984; Kreeft et al., 1984; Staton, 1981, 1984; Staton et al., 1982).

Second language learners also are able to create literacy texts in their second language. This kind of writing is facilitated by sustained contact with various literary forms or genres. As limited English speakers listen to and read various kinds of literary texts, they become aware of the characteristic elements of a particular genre, for example, the elements of place or setting, characters, initiating event, conflict and resolution so common to classic folk or fairy tales. Familiarity with the characteristics of each genre in turn enables children to create their own literary pieces (Johnson, 1985).

In addition to expressive and literary writing, limited English-speakers often undertake informational writing as a part of content area instruction. In science and social studies, for example, children may use writing to summarize what they have read, to describe something they have done, to record observations of phenomena, or to answer questions about content area material (Goodman, 1984; Searfoss, Bean & Smith, 1981).

*Finding 3.*

Although they are still learning the language, ESL writers are able to

take into account readers' comments about their work and respond by making changes in their pieces based upon readers' reactions, questions, requests for more information and so on. That is, ESL writers are able to engage in revising and editing their own pieces as they struggle to communicate their ideas (Heath, 1985; Hudelson, 1983; Urzúa, 1985). Both adults and children may serve as reader-reactors (Goodman, 1984; Heath, 1985; Hudelson, 1983; Urzúa, 1985), and reactions may be oral or written. Examinations of recorded conferences about drafts or pieces have shown that while early revision strategies may focus on adding on to what has been written (Hudelson, 1983) or making word level changes (Urzúa, 1985), as second language learners develop as writers and as they interact more with readers of their writing, their revisions change qualitatively. They become more able and more willing to make changes at the sentence, paragraph or text level and to make multiple drafts of pieces (Urzúa, 1985). In many classroom settings, the major reader-reactor is the child's teacher. There is some evidence to suggest that peer readers may have more substantial influence upon each other's writing than adults do (Goodman, 1984; Urzúa, 1985). However, Heath (1985) has shown that ninth grade limited English-speaking students responded well to written comments, questions and challenges from an unknown adult writing to them about written information they had sent her.

*Finding 4.*

The classroom context and the teacher have a tremendous impact on ESL children's development as writers. It has been shown that teachers teach reading and writing based on the beliefs they hold about the processes (Deford, 1985; Harste & Burke, 1977). Students' work in turn reflects their teachers' assumptions about reading and writing. As do adults (Zamel, 1985) and native English speaking children (Deford, 1981, 1985), ESL children quickly come to understand their teachers' views about composing. They quickly figure out what their teachers value in writing, and they work to produce what they perceive their teachers want (Edelsky, 1981a). If, for example, teachers believe that ESL children should produce written efforts that use only words they can spell and grammatical constructions that they have mastered in speaking, then ESL children's written efforts will refelct this view of what should be written down (Hudelson, 1984a). If, on the other hand, teachers encourage children's writing even though it is not perfect, viewing the draft as work in progress rather than as the final product, the children's work will mirror this assumption (Ammon, 1985). In other words, context matters in terms of the products children produce, their progress over time and their views of the writing process.

*Finding 5.*

ESL children differ from one another, both individually and culturally, and these differences have an effect on writing development. As with native speakers of English (e.g., Graves, 1982), there are significant individual differences in children's rates of developments as writers of English. Not all children become equally proficient in writing English in equal amounts of time (Edelsky, 1981a, 1981b; Hudelson, 1984a). Similar to the development of oral proficiency in ESL children (Strong, 1983; Wong-Fillmore, 1983), individual personality factors contribute to differential rates of growth in ESL child writers (Ammon, 1985).

Home and cultural group values and traditions also play an important role in the rate of development. In West Philadelphia, for example, Sino-Vietnamese children in public schools have made remarkable progress in acquiring school literacy. These children's home environments are not typical of the literate English language environments in other areas of the city where children tend to be successful in achieving literacy (see Cochran-Smith, 1984), but the children are part of a culture with one of the world's oldest literacy traditions. In their homes, for example, reading letters from and writing letters to their relatives are important activities. In addition, their refugee parents place a high value on their children becoming competent readers and writers of English because the children frequently help their parents by reading and interpreting English documents, by filling out a wide variety of forms and slips, and by writing notes and letters for them in English. As a result, the children work hard to become good readers and writers. They place a premium on writing correctly and neatly. And some of the content of what they write reflects the personal importance to them of becoming literate. Community traditions and values influence ESL children's literacy development, as they do with native speakers of English from varying cultural groups (Heath, 1983; Jordan, 1983; Philips, 1972). In the case described above, these traditions and values affect both ESL children's rates of growth as writers of English and the uses that these children see for writing (Schiefflen & Cochran-Smith, 1984).

Finally, community language norms and usage may also have an effect on children's written expression. Many children in our schools are members of bilingual speech communities that use a variety of English that differs phonologically, syntactically and sometimes lexically from standard English. Even after several years in English-medium schools, these children's informal, first draft writing in English may reflect the English spoken in their communities (Potter, 1981; Wolfram, Christian, Potter & Leap, 1979).

## What We're Learning: The Present Study

With the background of these generalizations, the rest of this paper considers several writing samples from four intermediate grade Southeast Asian children whose experiences as second language learners are examined by Rigg and Urzúa in other papers in this volume. Three of the children, Sonkla, Cham and Vuong were native speakers of Cambodian. The other, Khamla, was a native speaker of Laotian, although Vuong also spoke Laotian, having learned it when his family fled Cambodia to Laos. At the time these writing samples were collected these children had been in school in this country for 2 years. While all were members of regular elementary classrooms, they also participated in a "pullout" ESL program (a program in which children leave their classroom to attend special ESL classes with a teacher different from the one they have in their regular classroom). The written works examined here represent both some of the ESL teacher's assignments and some unassigned pieces the children shared with her.

The children's ESL teacher felt a commitment to helping the children succeed academically in their regular classrooms, including developing success with the kinds of expository, informational writing assignments their classroom teachers assigned. A typical classroom activity involved reading a textbook selection and responding in writing to statements or questions related to the text. The ESL teacher regularly worked in a similar way. Using the children's ESL reading textbook, which contained informational selections of two to four paragraphs followed by vocabulary study and/or comprehension questions, the teacher structured assignments for the children similar to those they received in their mainstream classrooms. The children's first draft responses to several of these assignments reveal information about them as writers, and are described below.

### *Assignment 1. Christopher Columbus Assignment*

On one occasion, the children read a four paragraph informational piece which presented the controversy over which explorers had reached the New World first, Columbus, the Vikings or the Irish. (See Appendix for a copy of the reading selection). The ESL teacher then asked the children to find some books about Christopher Columbus in the school library, to gather more information about the man and to answer two questions in the form of a composition. The children discussed what they had learned about Columbus before writing in response to the questions: (a) Was Columbus really the first European to discover America? (b) Was he the most important explorer? Why? Sonkla, Khamla and Cham responded to this assignment. An examina-

tion of their efforts reveals differences in each student's approach to the task. (In this and all the samples children's writings have been reproduced exactly as the children wrote them.)

*Example 1. Khamla's Written Response:* A Boy Who Love the Sea

Once there was a boy who love the sea. He said to himsafe that someday he will have a ship and he would be the capton of the ship But he didn't want to be like his father. This person name Christopher Columbus. Christopher was born in Genoa in Italy. Christopher want to see the big ship coming in and going out. He like to listen t a storly about the sailors. The sailor take about there adventures evertime when they came in the porch. Some of the storly were true some weren't. He began to wonder about the storly. He began to wonder about Genoa. The Sea all around Genoa was blue and beautiful. It was full of mystery danger and adventures. Christopher was now a big man. The people thought the word was flat. Christopher listen to many people. But all of the peoples say that the world was flat. But one man say the world was not flat it was round. The peoples laught at him. Christopher went to the man house. The man toll Christopher all he know about the world. After the man tell Christopher about the world because of this he is the most important man. He set sail to Portugal. He took some men with him. Christopher sail out to Portugal. A ship came out behind them and began to shot at them. The ship suck. The best men safe there live. Befar Christopher know. He was at Portugal. Christopher went to see the King and Queen. He toll them all about the world. He toll them that the was round like a ball. He show them the glob that he had bring to show them. After he toll about the world. He ask them for money to let three ship. The King and Queen did gave him the money and he did bet three ship. Now he took many men with him on the long trip. For along time they wate to see land. But they didn't see any land. For along time Christopher and his man wate. One day his man said land! land! They saw many indians. Christopher rech the New World in the year of 1492. Christopher wasn't the first person who discover the New World. The Vikings was the first to rech the New World. Wdon't know much about the Vikings becuse they didn't live any reager. The Vikings start for the New World in the year of 900.

*Sonkla's Written Response*

Once there was a boy named Christopher Columbus. He loved the Salty Sea. Columbus would be a seaman when he grew up. He would not be a weaver like his father, who woul all day in a little shop weaving yarn into cloth. Columbus was a strong man and tall with fiery blue eyes and reddish-blond hair.

He was born in Italy, in the seaport of Genoa, more than 500 years ago. He heard their tales about storms and adventures at the sea and far away lands almost at the end of the world. For in those days, most people thought that if you sailed out into the ocean you would come to the end of the world. People still thought that the world was flat. They laughed at the man who said that the world was not flat but the world was round like a ball. He thought it must be true that the world was round!

When Columbus was thirteen he left his father's house and sailed into the world to seek futune as a seaman. He felt free. He was still young man when he became a captain of the ship. He had little time to wonder weather the world was round or flat. Columbus left the sea and listened to stories about Atlantic Ocean. The stories of the great seafares of the vikings.

An Icelander told Columbus the saga of Leif Erickson. He heard the story in Iceland and nobody knew for certain.

Kiing Ferdinand and Queen Isabella welcomed Columbus. They wanted Spain to be stronger than Portugal. King and Queen had their hands full fighting heathen Moore who were holding part of their kingdom. Columbus found King and Queen in high good camp outside the fallen citadel. They gave him three ships and food and supplies for many month at sea.

The Queen promised a large reward to the sailor who first sighted land. The King gave Columbus a letter to his "Royal Brother" the emperor of China. He named his ships the Nina the Pinta and the Santa Maria. The three ships were small. The outgoing tide carried the three ships out of the Red River and into the Long pale breakers of the Atlantic. They never expected to see their father and husband again. They had sailed out, beyond the Canary Island and into the vast ocean, where even the birds from the out lying rock could fallow them no longer. They began to worry. One day was like another. All day they wish they better return to

Spain. Columbus and his men sailed to the west.

I think Columbus was a very important man in the whole world, because he was smart and he wanted to know, if the world was round or flat. Most people don't believe that the world was round. They kept on saying that the wold was not round the world was flat. If the world is round you will fall down.

*Cham's Written Response*

Columbus wasn't the first European to discover America. The Viking was. It took him a long time to get everything he needed like ships, sailors and money. He went to the King of Portugal. The King listened but said no. Columbus went to Ferdinand and Isabella, king and queen of Spain. It took him six long years before the King and Queen agreed about his ideas. The King and Queen gave him everything he needed. But it was too late. The Viking already went. Anyway Columbia was brave enough to do it and he was glad he did. That's how Christopher Columbus became famous.

Let us compare these three responses to the same writing assignment. Both Sonkla and Khamla wrote biographies of Columbus, revealing that they knew a lot about the details of Columbus' life, his fascination with the debate over the earth's shape (which influenced him to become an explorer), and his struggles to obtain financial support for his expeditions. Although Sonkla's organizational sense has been made clearer than Khamla's through her use of paragraphs, both children showed that they were able to narrate a sequence of facts and events. Both began their narrations with the device *Once there was*, followed by a general statement about Columbus. Both provided motivation for Columbus' actions before moving into a chronology of facts. Both made use of words and expressions that conveyed a sense of book or literary talk (Smith, 1976). Both presented narratives that moved logically from one point to the next. Although both writers alluded in their pieces to the Vikings and Columbus and the controversy over who was the first to reach the New World, only as they ended their pieces did either attempt to address directly the questions in their assignment. Both moved abruptly from their narrations to concluding statements which related more directly to the questions the teacher had asked. But, in contrast to their detailed and clear biographical narrations, neither presented well developed arguments or opinions in response to the questions.

In contrast to Khamla's and Sonkla's emphasis on chronological

narration, Cham began with a brief but direct response to the first question, followed by an abbreviated version of Columbus' attempts to secure funding for his expedition, and a relating of those struggles to the Vikings' arrival in the New World before Columbus. Her awkwardness of expression suggests that Cham considered the questions and tried to respond to them by using familiar content but had difficulty in expressing what she wanted to say, in making her arguments and connections, and in writing.

*Assignment 2: The Terry Fox Story*

On another occasion an assignment involved the children in a study skills activity on mapping. The children read a short piece (see Appendix) about Terry Fox, a young man who after losing a leg to cancer ran half way across Canada. The piece explained the purpose of Terry's run and provided a map of his proposed route. The teacher asked the children to plan and write about a trip they would like to take, and to map the route they would use. Khamla and Cham both completed the assignment, Khamla choosing to travel to Los Angeles and Cham visiting a friend in Wyoming.

*Example 2: Khamla's Written Response*

My farther and I was realy to go to Lon Angeles. It was a 1,000 mile from Portland. Hevef way from Salem our gas was gone. My farther have to wark to the next gas stedshan. And I weta in the car for him. When we got to Salem I start out and my way to Lon Angeles. I have got to Eugeneg I look at my map and I said to mysafe. I will go to swim at like. I didn't look wair I was going. The wind folld my map a way. I was los. I said I must get back to the hight way befor the sun go down. The sun did went down and I haven't got back to the hight way yet. I spent the night at the hid mountains at the morening I got up and start running down the hill. I run down and got up to another hill soon I was at a mointains I didn't kown that I was at a mountains than I kown that I was on a mountains. I said to my safe that I must get back to the hight way. I got to a small rade and I read the sien and it said Greenway street. I didn't kown wair was the hight way is. I think this Greenway street will take me to the hight way. I followed the street and I got to a bigger and bigger street. I read the sined and it said hightway this way. I got down to the hight way. I start running down the hight way. I for 24 hours. My feet I was hut. I stop and rest for about and hour I

start out running what I find was a snack it was readlsnaek. A readlesnaek was caming my way. I saw a stik. I grab the stik and I pike the stik up and thougth the snaek a way. I run fast as I coud. I so fast that I kown that I was hafe way from Los Angeles. When I got in to the City of Los Angeles the people were out on the street shering for me I was so happy. Vever baby was so happy for me that they went to invit me to dineder. I said no I'm sorry that I can't got to dindner with you. I have to go to my frineds hoome but I am so happy that you come out here to meet me.

*Cham's Written Response*

One morning it was snowing and I decided to go visit my friend, she lives in Wyoming. I packed everything I need and I want to ski all the way there. So I start off and promise my parent that I'll be back by Christmas. It was very long before I reach snake river in Idaho and it was getting dark so I decided to camp there for the night. The next morning I went to Pocatelle city and look around as I go. I ski and ski and I was so tired and sleepy. Suddenly, I was so surprised to see that I reach Rocky Mountain. I knew it would be to hard to ski up the mountain so I took off my ski and start climbing the mountains. Finally, I reach the top and I look down. I was so scared that I can't even moved. It looked so scared that I didn't want to go but I have no choice because I came this far and I can't go back. So I ly flat on my stomach and shout, "Here I go!" When I reach the buttom I didn't because I kepy my eyes closed tight. Then i heard a voice said, "Hi Cham, How's your tripe?" I turn around and there stood, Mollissa. "Ho Mollissa, I'm so glad to see you!" I exclaimed. "Me too," said Mollissa. "Your mother called me and said "That you were coming to see me," said Mollissa. Let's go skiing together." I said.

While both Khamla and Cham proved that they could consult maps to produce a broad outline of routes from Portland, Oregon to their destinations, this routing soon gave way to imaginative, personal, first person narratives. Instead of speculating about a future hypothetical trip and considering or explaining their choices, the writers devised stories of imaginary trips already taken and of their adventures enroute. The specific places on the map became secondary to the children's imagined experiences. The sites provided a backdrop for Cham's skiing and for Khamla's trek through the hills. Both writers set

up frightening, potentially dangerous situations for themselves (Khamla confronted a rattlesnake and Cham faced skiing down a high mountain), and both of them succeeded in escaping from their perils and in reaching their destinations. Both utilized dialogue toward the end of their stories. These two pieces were particularly interesting to this reader because Khamla's piece confirms her strengths as a narrator, whereas Cham's effort presents her in a new light, as a writer with the ability to create a coherent story (in contrast to the Assignment 1 Columbus effort).

*Assignment 3: The Time Machine*

A third assignment began as the children read a selection about space travel in the future after which they wrote a piece about a time machine. The teacher asked them to write a composition on the basis of several questions: (a) Time Machine: How do you get in it? What is it like? (b) The Year 2084: What is it like when you step out of the machine? What is different than today? (c) Do you want to go back to 1984? Why? As their pieces below demonstrate, the children responded somewhat differently to the assignment.

*Example 3: Cham's Written Response*

> One day I was studing in the library. Then I kicked something under the table. I crawled under the table and saw a time machine. It was small and then I saw a red button said "Push." I pushed the button and the time machine grew bigger. It was almost as big as the table. There were two bars on each side of the time machine. I took hold of the bars and climbed in. There were buttons everywhere and there was a chair. I sat in the chair and start pushing buttons. There was a sign said "Flying Succer." The Flying Succer zoomed up into the sky. I was getting hungry and I pushed another button. Green pills came out and I swallow it. After awhile my chair was spining and the machine was running by itself. Finally the flying succer land. I got up and went to the door to push the button. I stepp out of the flying succer. Everything was odder than the flying succer. There were people skeleton and dinosaur's skeleton. It was all messy and ugly. I want to go back to 1984 because I want to be with people and my friends. I want to live in a nice house.

*Khamla's Written Response*

One day my friend and I went for a hike. When we got up the hill we saw a little house. We all went insiad the house. Sonderly! the hol house was going down down down. The house stop at the baretom of the floor. We went out of the house. I ask my friend what are we doing in a cave? Look throw a light up a head. Will lets go what are wateing for. Come on guys but all my friends were gone I went wair they were standing. Sonderly i deepsufpear iin another world. I saw my friend behid me. One of my friend said lets look around. We are in the year 2084. How did we get here? I think I know how did we got here. How! How! How! all right I'll tell you did we got here. Did you remeber when we step in the small house. Yes! we did remeber. I think the house is the time mashen. If we want to go back to our time all we got to di is to do it backward. Did you see that car it is flying. Look at the toob there useing the toob to go one plice to anther. Look at the pliceman he cairring a leashergun the people is defferent so is the plant net.

*Vuong's Written Response*

I went to school. Nobody was there I went to my room. Someone press the button a little room come down on me. I was trap I couldn't get out. there no way out When I step out of the time machine. The world is different than our world. Th Peoples are different they wear different cloths. The peoples are robots the robots are made of hard steel. They are big there are no human there. There house also made of hard steel. They are big there are no human there. There house also made of hard steel they have a big city. I want to come back to 1984 because there are no human. The peoples there are robot that why I want to come back.

As in her Terry Fox piece, Cham created a first person story-like narrative, imagining herself in the time machine, setting the scene, and detailing the interior and workings of the vehicle that carried her into the future. She addressed such practical aspects of the space journey as the need for food, and provided a brief description of the desolation of 2084 as well as her reaction to it. Her piece suggested personal involvement with the assignment – an entering into the fantasy.

Khamla also began with a first person narrative, but soon switched to

a combination of conversation between himself and his friends, and first person storytelling, a technique reminiscent of his use of dialogue at the end of his imaginary trip piece. His work concentrated on the children's actions and dialogue in relation to the time machine itself rather than on a description of the machine and the world of 2084, as per the assignment. Khamla's draft ended abruptly with brief comments on some physical aspects of the planet.

Vuong's effort was the shortest and the one that answered the questions asked most directly. To this reader his piece also suggested a lack of personal involvement with the writing as compared to the others, and a sense of an overriding concern to answer the questions and complete the assignment in order to satisfy the teacher (in this case the hypothetical reader/evaluator of his work). The piece did not convey that the writer was concerned with creating something entertaining or interesting for the reader (whether the reader was the child himself or another child or adult), as in the case of Khamla's and Cham's pieces. While Khamla and Cham created pieces that transformed the assignment from a set of straightforward sequenced responses to the questions into narratives that projected individual interests and interpretations, Vuong took care to answer each of the questions posed in the order asked without revealing any of himself.

*Assignment 4. Army Ants Piece*

A final assigned piece on army ants, completed by Cham, Khamla and Voung, has provided an intriguing comparison to the other pieces. After reading a five paragraph selection that described some of the habits of army ants (see Appendix for the text), the three wrote about what they had learned about the animals. Because Vuong and Khamla became particularly interested in the subject of ants, the teacher suggested that they might create a book about them, however that creation never materialized. Instead, all three children produced pieces that listed facts, pieces that focused on what had been understood and remembered from the text.

*Example 4: Cham's Written Response*

> Army ants lives in South America and Africa. In Africa it is very hot. The temperature was about eighty-six degrees. Ant enemies hunt for food in the summer during the night. After fall days have ended, grown-up ants don't need food. They laid eggs. Through the winter their larvae will stay in a safe place waitin for warm weather to come. Some enemy ants who live during the summer have died because it's too

hot. Enemy ants eat spiders or people, though they aren't tasty. Enemy ants kills people and and animals. Enemy ants are very dangerous.

*Khamla's Written Response*

Army Ants travel during the night. Doing the day the Amy Ants rest. Some of the Amy Ants go out and hunts. They hunts for a small insects or a horse or a goat. They leave scent behid for other ants to come and eat. Sometime Army Ants kill people. Amy Ants can only be found in Central America or Africa. Amy Ants sometime get in fight with Black Ants. In Africa the people are happy when the Ants come in the village. Because the Ants kill all of the mice. Amy Ants is the most dangerous ants in the world.

*Vuong's Written Response*

Army ants are kill. Nobody couldn't kill them because their to many. They are insects. They small but they can kill anything. When they hungry they can kill a goat people. They lives in the hole. When night times they come out and hunt for food. Sometimes they eat insects sometimes they don't. They are dangerous ants in the world. They are army ants. The color is red and black.

While they recalled information about the ants and created paragraphs where it is sometimes possible to see the connection between one fact and the next, these young ESL writers did not produce pieces with significant story lines as compared with some of their other efforts. All three efforts most closely resemble Vuong's Time Machine piece (Example 3) in the writers' apparent concern to include as many facts as possible about the army ants, as well as in their lack of personal involvement with what they were writing.

## The Assignments as a Whole

Undoubtedly there are multiple reasons for the differences in the children's responses to their ESL teacher's assignments, and multiple reasons for the differences in the products. With regard to the Columbus pieces (Example 1), in spite of the assignment and the ESL reader passage, the other materials the children read and subsequent class discussions may have provided more information about Columbus than about previous explorers of the New World. The children therefore

may not have had the information base to respond in detail to the assignment's questions. Prior knowledge about Columbus may also have influenced the contents of the children's pieces. Limited class time and only one class period in which to write may have meant that Khamla and Sonkla ran out of time to respond completely and clearly to the teacher's questions after they had finished chronicling Columbus' life. Cham may not have been especially interested in the assignment, which may have contributed to her short response. Cham and Sonkla may have been more interested in narrating Columbus' life than in responding directly to the questions.

Because of the questions asked, both the Terry Fox (Example 2) and the Time Machine (Example 3) assignments afforded the writers some opportunity to relate their writing at least partially to themselves, as they could choose their own make-believe trip and react to the 2084 world they had created. That is, the teacher's instructions provided some latitude for the children to interpret the assignments in their own ways. While this may not have been the teacher's intention, Cham and Khamla apparently took advantage of this opportunity, since they did respond in light of their experiences and fantasies. Thus they made the task one of creating personal narratives which combined fact with fantasy. Vuong did not do this, possibly reflecting a lack of interest in the assignments or a view of himself as a writer that was more limited than the others'.

In the Army Ant (Example 4) assignment, the children did not have specific instructions from the teacher that suggested that they respond to what they had read in a personal, interactive or even contemplative way. This may have resulted in the listing of facts that resulted. It is likely that the children were considering that they were going to take what they had written and convert it into illustrated book pages with a sentence or two on each page. In that case, the presentation of facts could be related directly to pictures that they were going to create. The piece on army ants that the children had read had this informational emphasis.

Additionally, and perhaps most importantly, at this point in their development as writers of English, these children may have had more experience in and may be more capable of using writing for expressive and literary purposes: that is, using writing to create stories, narrate personal events and express individual reactions to happenings in their lives, in contrast to using writing to report facts, to present pieces of evidence, to argue fact or point of view, or to speculate or consider possibilities.

In examining the development of writing among native English speaking children, Britton and his colleagues (1975) have suggested that children first use writing in a self-expressive mode and that only

gradually do they develop abilities to write poetically and transactionally. Britton and others (Britton et al., 1975; Martin, 1976) also have noted that even when children write transactionally (that is, when they write with a view to making information clear to the reader), they may move back and forth between transactional writing (reporting facts) and self-expressive writing (reacting to their reports). Only when children write lifeless, uninteresting lists of facts (similar to the Army Ants pieces) do they stay in the transactional mode.

Oljean (1984) and Jacobs (1984), examining the informational writing of native English speakers in the United States, have found that when elementary children are asked to write informational pieces they almost inevitably intertwine narrative and personal self-expression with factual information. That is, children use narration and self-expression to convey information. Jacobs has suggested that it may be both unrealistic and counterproductive to elementary school children's development as writers to expect them to write expository prose as adult writers conventionally do. Rather, children must be free to combine informational writing – the presentation of facts – with personal musings as they venture into expository writing.

Paramour and Wilkinson (1985), reporting on the development of narrative writing in English children ages 7 to 13, trace a progression over time in children's abilities to write stories, moving from chronicles of events through simple stories (including a conflict or problem, response and resolution) to well developed stories elaborating characters, setting and events. They note that children's narratives frequently are based in their personal lives and that personal self-expressive elements appear with poetic ones.

In applying these research results to the writing development of the four young ESL learners portrayed in this paper, we can see that three of them, Cham, Sonkla and Khamla, have fairly well developed, though certainly not equal, abilities to write self-expressively and to create stories (to write poetically) in English. Thus in their responses to their teacher's assignments, they have combined transactional with self-expressional and poetic writing. While they may not always have answered the questions that the teacher posed nor created exactly the kind of writing that the teacher had in mind, they have used the writing abilities that they have developed, and they have completed the writing assignments as best they were able.

This view of Cham, Sonkla and Khamla as capable of producing fairly well developed stories and personal statements is strengthened by looking at some unassigned pieces of writing the children did outside of class and shared with their teacher. Examples 5, 6 and 7 present some of these unassigned pieces.

*Example 5: Sonkla's Unassigned Pieces*

*Little Georgie*

In the bassement of an old white house, there lived a family of mice. There was a moma mouse, a papa mouse and a baby mouse. One Sundy morning the popa mouse asked little Georgie to go fishing with him. Little Georgie was so excited he raced around chasing his tail. Popa said when I was your age my family always came here for picnics. On hot days your uncle Sam came over to play with you. That was when you were a baby. Sometimes he asked your mom if he could take you to the park with him. Your mom always let your uncle Sam take you when she needed to do something special for dinner. She invited aunt Caroline, uncle Sam and Grandma Grandpa. They came over for a nice dinner with us. After they came over to spend a night. Once there was a noise in the tree. Popa there's something in the tree, said little Georige. I didn't see anything up there. I think I know who it could be," said little Gorgie. Suddenly there a great big jumped of the tree. It was uncle Sam. "Hi little Gorgia" "Hi Uncle Sam" said little Gorgia. Little Gorgia father got three big fishs, Little Gorgia got one small fish. They got ready to go home. Little Gorgia put his hand on the water. Suddenly something touched his hand. He looked in the water, he saw a little goldfish, he picked up the goldfish put it in the bottle and took it home. When they got home they saw moma and aunt Caroline sitting on the blanket in the backyard. Uncle Sam and Georgia's father were in the kitchen. When they were cooking, Georgia ran up stair and dressed up pretty. They have a dinner. After they ate uncle Sam and aunt Caroline says that they want to spend here a night. So Georgia's parents said "O.K." When it was 10:0 clock they all went to bed.

*Making up Stories*

I don't like the subsatue teacher on Tuesday. She told us to write a fable about the animals you like. I finished my fable. Then I let my friends read it. They said it was good. After I let my friends read it I gave it to the teacher to correct it for me. When she read it she said it kind of good, but it not good enough. She told me that I have to start my story over. After she left my desk I felt terrible. I got angry with her. I

want to tear my paper in front of her, but I can't. If I tear my paper I have to do it all over again. I almost stick my tongue out at her.

*Example 6: Khamla's Unassigned Pieces*

*Disenearland*

One day it was hot and cool it was at summer time. My father sad we will to Disenearland. A day pas buy. We were of to Disenearland. 5 day later we were at Disenearland. We check in to hotles. it were night time My father said get to bed you want to get up erlee. We got a big day tomorrelow. It was to tomorrelos. and when went to Disenearland. We went in to the harted house. I open the door We got in side the door was lock I can't open the door. We were in side a room that have no door. What wold hovepen to us. I it was this hooooooooooo. It was a gost. the gost flew in side the room and mad a sound hoooooo. the gost said you are in my house. The gost said if you don't get out of my house I will take you far a raid in my gost train. You live me no joist I will take you for a trian raid. The room was streching out and out. the gost said is the room getting biger or are you geting biger. The room was getting bigger and bigger. The gost toll us to open the door and get on the trian. We got on the trian. The train was moveing out. The train was moveing tolled the growd. We got to the growd. and it stay to move lowerd. We saw many different thing. We saw the daceing gost. The gost of the past. I saw many gost dancing togather it was just like that they were having a ball. We saw the piolt of the gold. We got out of the honted huse. I ask my dad if we can come back to the honted huse agand.

December 31, 1983-84 it was New Year Day I and my brother went over to sleep at our frands house. When we got to our frands house we play and watch T.V. We had pizza and coke to drink and eat. My frands Mother said safe some room for dinner. When it is dinner time We all ate a lot. ater dinner we all had a big peas of pie. Ater we all at the pie we wach T.V. It was 11:59 my brothe said it allmost New Year time then it was 12:00 New Year time. We open a paretale of chempan and sealprate New Year. We went out and shoot gun it was time for sleep so we all went to sleep.

*Example 7: Cham's Unassigned Pieces*

One day Smurfy and I went to sleep. I had a sweet dream at first but then it turn into a horrible dream. I was at the park one day when the sky got so dark, it was like midnight. Everyone was pushing and shoveling trying to get home. I sat on the bench and Smurfy sat beside me to keep out off everybody's way. It was very quiet and when everybody went home. The wind began to blow and howled. It blew so hard that Smurfy flew away and hide behind a tree. Suddenly, the lightning roared and the thunder roared and the thunder crashed. It was an unfriend roar, it sounded like it was mad at somebody or something. Suddenly, there was a loud noise. I looked around for Smurfy. It was like being blind because I had to use my hands and legs to feel things. The lightning roared at my smurf and flash the light on it, it look as though it would burn. The thunder crashed. The lightning and the thunder seem as though as it was give the little smurf power. Smurfy became alive and he was growing and growing. His face, feet and arms were so wierd. It puted out it's arms as it walked toward me. Oh no, my precious Smurfy, it has turn into a horrible horrible monster by the lightning and Thunder! It grab me and flew into the sky. We flew higher and higher and higher. "Somebody stop it," I said. "lightning, thunder, bird, eagle, whatever, just stop this creature!" I said. I stopped a minute and think. "Mother earth, please change this monster back to my smurf!" I yelled. The monster begin to shrank smaller and smaller. I fainted and we both started falling. I held onto my smurf and floated in the sky.

*Who's the ghost?*

One day Natalie was going to have a birthday party. It was a saturday morning and it was her birthday. She invited 8 children to the party, 4 girls and 4 boys. They were going to spend the night there, too. Natalie and her mother were all set. The door rang. All the children came in carrying gifts and birthday cards. The gave it to Natalie and said, "Happy Birthday Natalie." These are the children's names Tracy, David, Cham, Eddy, Erin, Troy, Christian and Joe. We ate birthday cake, candies and cupcakes, too. Natalie's mother had to go to someone's house. We pop balloons, sings and talk. We also dance. After that we went to bed. The girls

slept in one room and the boys slept in the other room. We talked and talked. We slept in a sleeping bag. It was 1 o'clock, then something or someone was howling, louder and louder every time. Everybody got up and started screaming. "Ha! Someone is missing in this room," said Erin. Everybody began to count one, two, three, four. Nobody is missing," said Natalie. I wonder is anythings wrong with the boys. The boys came running down the hall. They pushed the door opened. You frightened us to death!" exclaimed Christina. "Well, you're not as frighten as we are!" yelled Joe. Two people are missing in our room and we don't even know who they are. I think I'll go get a flashlight from my bag," I said. Suddenly, as I opened the closet door, I saw a ghost. "H-h-help some..." I said. But, before I could finish, the ghost started chasing me. Troy pulled me back and ran. "In the bathroom!" yelled Joe. Everyone jumped in except the ghost. "Oh no, here comes one behind us! yelled Tracy. "There's one coming toward us. and another one behind us." "All of us can push it," said Troy. I opened the door and yelled, "Here we go!" We push the ghost so hard that his head hit the wall. "Ouch," said the ghost. Come on don't just stand there, Cham," said Joe, shaking so hard. When we went back to our room, Christina locked the door. We saw Eddy had a bandage on his head, and we saw David, too. Both of them were reading books and laughing. "Where were you?" asked Eddy. "You don't know what happened to us?" I asked. "Nope, not at all. We were in the kitchen getting something to eat," they laughed so hard. I couldn't help it, I laughed too. Soon everybody laughed but they didn't know why they were laughing except me, Eddy and David. "What a day," sighed Erin. Now I know the ghost secret.

THE END
Who's the ghost?

In the piece Little Georgie, Sonkla created a fictional account (possibly rooted in her own experience) of a family of mice. Her piece contains all of the basic elements of a story: the setting (the house and park), the characters (the mice), events or conflicts (going fishing and the mysterious being in the tree), resolution or conclusion (finding Georgie's uncle, catching fish and going home). Sonkla experimented with dialogue in this piece, and although it could be argued that her story line was not terribly suspenseful, she nevertheless concluded her tale logically. In Making Up Stories Sonkla proved that she could use

writing both to relate a sequence of events and to provide her personal reaction to the happenings.

In his Disneyland piece, Khamla proved his ability to set the scene and then to relate the sequence and details of an event of personal importance, using a combination of narration and direct quotation to tell his story and to involve his audience. His use of rhetorical comment (what wold hovepen to us) and his description of the ghost's words and actions created a suspenseful story. Khamla's New Year's Eve account provided yet another example of his ability to recreate a personal event, although with less sense of excitement and involvement than the Disneyland piece.

Cham showed herself to be a skilled storyteller. In her Smurfy story, she made effective use of similes as she described her sweet dream that turned into something horrible. Her buildup of detail upon detail created a suspenseful situation that she then resolved by appealing to a power beyond her own. Her knowledge of the construction of stories was clear in this piece. In Who's the ghost?, Cham added the element of mystery and a surprise ending to her tale of children being scared by a ghost. In what may be an account based on a true happening, Cham showed the ability to combine narrative with dailogue, as well as the ability to provide clues to the reader without openly revealing the solution to the mystery at the end of the story. In this piece Cham revealed an awareness of audience and an ability to take the reader into account in the construction of an entertaining story.

And what of Vuong? It may be that Vuong did not enjoy writing on his own, because he did not share any unassigned pieces with the ESL teacher and thus none are available for review here. Vuong did, however, write on topics of his own choice during some in-class writing assignments. The piece in example 8 represents some of these assignments.

*Example 8: Vuong's Unassigned Topics*

*TITLE. SCHOOL*

I like school because its fun because I got a lot of friends. And we learned so much we learned so much about school teacher taught us everything they can they knew what is right and what is wron. My favorite subject in school is math and spelling thoses are my favorites in school. School its fun because you got all thoses friends I enjoyed I was doing in school we learned a lot we learned about computers we learned everything we could we had this great teacher he's nice I like being in school we can learn about the world. That

what its all about is learning. I also like ESL is best place to be in. My favorite sport is basketball.

It was Valentines Day Mr Bowers just got a new baby its girl. He so happy with his baby. Then the party began everybody was passing their Valentines cards out to their friends. I did do it because I forgot. Everybody did their but I did do my. And we had to make our own ice cream and we ate our ice cream. After that we played a game called unrape the candies and we had to eat them and we lost to the girl.

The baby name is Beth Ann Bowers. Mr. Bowers went to hospital to take his wife and the baby home today. Mr Bowers had to stayed up all night until the baby born and Mr. Bowers call to school to till Mrs. Lroy the baby was born in the hospital. And the next day it was Valentine's Day and everybody came in class and saw the letter on the wall it said congratulations Mr Bowers with his new baby.

A review of the first piece suggests that Vuong views writing as something to be done for the teacher in a specific way as he writes the word *Title* and then *School*, and strings together a series of sentences about the topic. The piece on Valentine's Day suggests that Vuong does have some awareness of putting together sentences that deal with the same idea (paragraphing) and that he is able to narrate sequences of events of importance to him. But these pieces also reveal Vuong to be a much less fluent and comfortable writer than the others, and perhaps one who sees writing more exclusively as an assignment to be completed and evaluated, than as a possible vehicle for self-expression and enjoyment.

## Conclusions

In the previous sections, samples of ESL children's writing have been presented and examined in light of previous research into second language writing in children. The following conclusions may be drawn from this analysis of these four ESL learners' pieces.

1. It has been noted (finding 5) that ESL children vary in the rates at which they grow as English writers. It also has been found (finding 1) that ESL children are willing to express themselves in writing even though they do not have complete mastery over the language. This study supports these findings. In spite of the fact that the four children had been in school in this country for about equal amounts of time, they were not all equally developed writers of English. Vuong was the least

skilled of the four, but there was also variation in the other three. Such variations also have been documented in native speakers of English (Calkins, 1983; Graves, 1982; Paramour & Wilkinson, 1985).

2. With the exception of Vuong, the children in this study demonstrated considerable ability to create well developed stories in English. Their stories combined literary narrative and self-expressive aspects of writing (finding 2). In this respect these children resembled the 10- and 13-year-old native English speakers in the work of Paramour and Wilkinson (1985).

3. Previous categorizations of ESL children's writing (finding 2) have included self-expressive, poetic or literary and transactional or informational writing. In this ESL classroom, the teacher's intention was to help the children develop their abilities to write expository prose so that they could respond successfully to particular kinds of classroom tasks. While the children did not always respond to the teacher's assignments exactly as they were given, they did work hard to produce pieces. They responded to the assigned writing tasks as best they could, using their understandings and abilities as writers at a given point in time. In particular, their use of poetic and self-expressive forms of writing as part of their responses to more informational or expository writing tasks corresponds to what researchers have noted about the writing of native English speaking children close in age to these children (Britton et al., 1975; Jacobs, 1984; Oljean, 1984).

4. In addition to individual variation among these ESL children (finding 5), there was also variation within each child's work. The children responded differently to different assignments and produced pieces varying both in quantity and in quality. No single piece of writing by itself provided as complete a picture of each child as a writer as did an examination of all the pieces, assigned and unassigned, produced by each child.

5. The unassigned pieces the children gave to the teacher not only revealed some of their individual interests and experiences, but also provided additional evidence as to the children's development as English writers.

6. The children had different views both of writing in English and of themselves as writers, particularly when Vuong is contrasted to the others. As is evidenced particularly by their unassigned writing, Cham, Sonkla and Khamla had begun to see that they could use writing

both to express themselves and to create narratives that hung together. They also began to see that they could write stories that could be read and enjoyed by self or others. In contrast, Vuong did not choose to write unless the writing was assigned. What he did write revealed no sense of writing for enjoyment of self or other, rather, he wrote to complete a task and with a view of the reader as judge, evaluator and critic. While it is impossible to know the reasons for the differences in the children, it is certainly probable that both individual differences in personality (finding 3) and classroom contexts (finding 4) played a role in the children's views of themselves as writers and of the writing process in general.

## Implications for Instruction

Readers of research reports frequently put down studies they have read with the feeling – so what? What does any of this mean for me? Believing that research can and should inform practice, it seems to me appropriate to close this paper with the following implications for instruction, implications that come from the research conclusions.

1. Child ESL learners should receive multiple opportunities to compose, to express their ideas in written form. While children may choose to write outside of school, time for writing must also be provided during the school day.

2. Within the school setting, young ESL learners should undertake a variety of writing assignments. That is, they should write on a variety of topics (across the content areas of the curriculum), for a variety of purposes (e.g., to reflect on ideas, to express feelings, to present information, to entertain with a story, to narrate events, to give an opinion, etc.), to a variety of audiences (themselves, other children and other adults).

3. In addition to assigned writing, elementary school ESL learners need time for unassigned writing, for writing what they choose to write. Whether Calkins' (1983) term "writing workshop" is used or not, there needs to be a time during the school day when everyone in the class writes on self chosen topics and has the opportunity to share drafts of pieces, as well as completed efforts, with peers and teachers.

4. In evaluating the writing abilities of ESL children, it is crucial to use many pieces of writing rather than just one. Using only a single writing sample will almost certainly provide a distorted picture of a child's skills.

5. Any evaluation of ESL children's writing abilities must also take into account the circumstances surrounding the writing, the context in which the writer produced the piece or pieces. Writing ability is not a constant. As the children in this study have demonstrated, written products vary in quality and quantity for a variety of reasons. The more we know about the writers and the writing context, the better we will be able to evaluate fairly ESL children's development as writers of English, and the better we will be able to facilitate that development.

6. Attention to the writing context must include our careful consideration as teachers of the kinds of writing assignments we carry out with ESL children, including examination of the assumptions and expectations we bring to the assignments we give. Sometimes we have different assumptions and expectations from children, and what they produce is not what we as adults have anticipated or expected. Looking at our own assumptions and expectations should help us avoid jumping to hasty conclusions about children's responses to various writing tasks, and should help us try to think of what the children might have been thinking as they responded to a task.

7. Above all, we must realize that not all young ESL students will develop as writers of English with the same ease and at the same rate. It is crucial that we do not approach ESL children with a preconceived set of ideas about what is "normal" ESL writing development and about how quickly children should develop as writers. Although we can identify general patterns of development among ESL children, there are also significant individual differences among them. The teaching task, then, is to accept and value these differences and to facilitate and nurture our children's growing abilities to express themselves in writing in English.

## Appendix

### Who Really Discovered America?

For a long time, people believed that Christopher Columbus was the first person from Europe to land in the New World. But recent findings have shown that several other people may have journeyed to America long before Columbus.

One group of explorers who probably beat Columbus to America was the Vikings. They came from Northern Europe to Iceland and Greenland. They may have made voyages as far west as Canada more than 800 years ago. The Vikings did not leave any records. But Eskimo carvings

made more than 800 years ago show people dressed the way the Vikings did.

The Vikings may not have been the first to come to America either. St. Brendan, an Irish monk, may have landed in Canada more than 1,200 years ago. Old writings show that the monk left Ireland in a leather boat. He had a small crew with him. Several years ago, a modern explorer sailed the same kind of boat from Ireland to Canada in 50 days. St. Brendan may have made the same trip. No one knows for sure.

Columbus may not have been first. He is the most important explorer, however. Why? Soon after Columbus' four trips, other explorers came to the New World. They decided to settle here. They set up new homes on American soil.

### Run Terry, Run

Terry Fox had cancer. It left him with only one leg. Yet he became famous for running. He ran with an artificial leg to raise money to fight cancer. His plan was to run all the way across Canada, from St. John's to Vancouver. He would cross the water by boat. Terry started out in St. John's in April, 1981, and made it to the halfway point.

Terry had to give up the run at Thunder Bay when doctors found cancer in his lungs. He died on June 28, when he was 22 years old. He raised more money for the Canadian Cancer Society than he dreamed possible – over $24 million.

This map shows the route that Terry Fox planned to run and the part of the route he was able to cover.

### The World's Most Dangerous Army

This army is one of the most vicious in the world. No one knows where or when it will fight next. Nothing can escape from this army. The army has millions of soldiers. Yet none of the soldiers can see, hear, or speak. The soldiers are ants.

Army Ants live in enormous camps in Africa, Asia and Central America. A large army camp may have as many as 30 million ants.

Special ants, called scouts, go out first to locate food. They may find some big insects. They leave a smell to guide other ants to the food. Then the army strikes by surprise in lines up to 65 feet wide. The trapped animals can't get away. The unfortunate insects are carried back to feed all of the other hungry ants.

Army ants will eat any living thing. They usually eat other insects.

But some army ants eat larger animals like horses and goats. Some ants even attack people.

Many people are happy when army ants come to their village. Why? The ants eat field mice or other animals that damage people's homes or food. The ants clean out these harmful animals. When the ants move on, the people move back into their "clean" villages.

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# Reading in ESL: Learning from Kids

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# Reading in ESL: Learning from Kids

This is not a traditional research report. The stereotypical traditional researcher is objective, dispassionate, unbiased, and uninvolved with the subjects. The first person pronoun is not used, because the ideal traditional researcher remains faceless, an unseen Scientific Observer who records and reports data. I cannot be totally objective: my report here of four Southeast Asian kids reading and talking about what they have read is biassed by what I know about reading and by what I know about these kids. More, I am not dispassionate: I care about how these kids read, about what they are asked to read, and about how my report will affect other teachers and other researchers. This report is organized accordingly: first, I will present my bias, my theoretical perspective; second, I will present the findings of a miscue analysis study on four ESL youngsters; third, I will examine the readability of the materials used in this study; finally, I will suggest ways in which all of this speaks to teachers and researchers.

## Theoretical Perspective

My view of the reading process owes much to Goodman and Goodman (K. Goodman, 1967, 1984; K. Goodman & Y. Goodman, 1978) and to Frank Smith (1975, 1982). I think that reading is not a process of turning letters into sounds or of recognizing and attacking words, but a process of communication between a writer and a reader and, like all communication, is a meaning-making activity. Making sense from print is both the process and the product of reading. This process uses four cuing systems. First is the pragmatic system which includes, but is not restricted to, the social and cultural contexts in which someone reads something; it also involves the beliefs a reader has about his or her ability to read this material. The second cuing system is the semantic system which includes, but is more than, vocabulary. K. Goodman (1984) includes in the semantic system what I have called the pragmatic system; he says the semantic system "is the whole system by which language may represent highly complex social and personal meaning" (1984:103). The third cuing system is the syntactic; this is the grammar of the language, the glue that holds the semantic system in place. The fourth cuing system is the graphophonic one: the writing

system of a language and the complex relationship of the writing system to the sound system.

A reader samples cues from all four systems at the same time, and all four types of cues help the reader to predict what is coming next in the text, to confirm that prediction, and to alter the predictions that are not confirmed. Here is an example: a 3-year-old child brings me a book with a brightly colored picture of a rabbit wearing a blue jacket on the cover, and asks me to read her "Peter the wabbit." Before I open the book, I am sure that inside I will find Beatrix Potter's story and illustrations. Moreover, I predict that the story will open with *once upon a time*. I open the cover and sample the print for the semantic, syntactic, and graphophonic cues that will confirm my guess. I look specifically for these graphophonic cues: *O*— ——- ——. I don't need more than the first letter and the word lengths of the first four words to confirm my prediction; finding them gives me syntactic and semantic information too. For example, the semantic unit *once upon a time* confirms my prediction that this is a children's story, not a recipe or a mystery or a TV guide.

Sometimes our predictions don't fit with the remainder of the sentence or with the rest of the text. Then we need to rethink and create a prediction that will fit. There will be many examples of this in the miscue analysis of the children's reading, but here is just one. Khamla, one of the children in this study, was reading a story called "Winter Olympics," and after reading the first paragraph about snow and ice, he began the next paragraph.

Khamla: The winter
Text: To win a gold medal . . .

Khamla has used the graphophonic cues *T - win* and has predicted that the syntax of this sentence will be the most common one in English – an article and noun followed by a verb phrase. His prediction doesn't work with the rest of the sentence, so he goes back to the start of the sentence:

Khamla: The winter, to win a gold medal . . .
Text: To win a gold medal . . .

K. Goodman coined the term *miscue* (1967) to reflect his belief that the cues offered on the page can mislead the reader, and cause the reader to predict something different from what is printed. K. Goodman used the term to indicate that this difference between what is printed and what is read is not random error, but is a result of a reader's active use of the cuing systems as a reader constructs meaning.

Buck (1973) used K. Goodman's theory of reading to explain in a general sense the miscues of ESL readers. She pointed out that the

non-native reader of English might not know where to look for cues in the graphophonic, syntactic, and semantic systems, and therefore could have difficulty sampling those systems effectively in order to predict, confirm, and where necessary, correct. Not knowing where the information is stored forces readers to go very slowly, since they must pay attention to every sentence, every word, and sometimes even every letter. As Smith (1975) points out, this results in tunnel vision, an inability to get meaning from the whole because of intensive concentration on tiny parts.

As we read, we confirm our guesses by asking ourselves, does this make sense? Non-native speakers may not have the appropriate cultural background to know if something does or doesn't make sense, and therefore may be unable to confirm or correct. In what situations does it make sense for a rabbit to wear a blue jacket? What kind of English is likely to be used in those situations? These are the sorts of questions non-native speakers may find impossible to answer.

Miscue analysis has been used with non-native speakers of English in several studies. The basic assumption underlying miscue analysis is that a reader's miscues are "windows on the reading process" (K. Goodman, 1973); that is, the patterns of miscues show how the cuing systems are being utilized in the sampling, predicting, confirming cycles. Goodman and Goodman have developed two forms of miscue analysis: the *Goodman Taxonomy* (K. Goodman & Burke, 1973) is the more complex, requiring extensive training and a great deal more time than the *Reading Miscue Inventory* (Y. Goodman & Burke, 1972), which was developed for classroom teachers. Both forms of miscue analysis focus on quality of miscues, not on quantity; both show a reader's strategies. I will discuss briefly five miscue studies carried out with young ESL speakers.

Rigg (1977a) used the Goodman Taxonomy for an indepth study of a sixth grade Arabic speaker reading a lengthy (15 page) book. The miscue analysis technique asks a reader to read aloud a complete story or article, and then to retell it to the researcher. Both the oral reading and the retelling are tape recorded and both are then analyzed. Rigg pointed out that this ESL speaker, Leila, made a great many miscues, but she also made great sense of the story. Rigg showed how Leila used the graphophonic, syntactic, and semantic cuing systems, and how she was able to predict, confirm, and correct as she built meaning from print in this long and, for her, very difficult story.

Romatowski (1981) also used the Goodman Taxonomy when she studied the reading of Polish children in their first language and in ESL. One of Romatowski's conclusions was, "when the content of the printed matter falls out of the range of the reader's experience . . . the ability of the reader . . . to comprehend will be hampered" (p. 25).

Hodes (1981) used the Reading Miscue Inventory in her study of Hasidic children reading in their first language, Yiddish, and in two second languages, English and Hebrew. One of Hodes' results resembles Romatowski's: both report that the child with the highest number of miscues gave the best retelling. Rigg's (1977b) miscue analysis of two Chaldean children had the same results: one youngster called off every word except one accurately but gave an inadequate retelling; the other made many miscues but retold comprehensively. The ESL children in these three studies, at least, seemed to emphasize word-perfect accuracy or the meaning of the story. The children in these studies who seemed to focus on getting the words right lost the story.

Like Romatowski, Hodes noted "the significance of cultural factors" (1981, p.31). That is, when the background of the author and the reader are very similar, the overlap of shared factors makes the material easier to understand (if other factors are equal).

Rigg (1977c) gave a preliminary report on K. and Y. Goodman's 1978 study of the reading in English of children from four different language groups: Arabic, Navajo, Samoan, and Spanish. Ten children in grades 2, 4, and 6 read and retold two stories each, and 96 of the 240 tapes thus recorded were analyzed using the Goodman Taxonomy.

Some of the most important conclusions of that study are these: First, factors other than first language determined how well the youngsters read in English. Other factors were more important than whether a child spoke a language without a history of written literature (such as Navajo or Samoan), or one with an alphabetic system different from English (such as Arabic), or one very close to English with a rich body of written literature (Spanish).

Second, all of the students in the study were able to read and to retell two full-length, complete stories. Their control over English was sufficient so that what Clarke (1981) calls a "language competence ceiling" did not seem to affect their ability to use effective reading strategies. Some concepts clearly were foreign to the readers, but as Goodman and Goodman (1978) point out, some of those foreign concepts were taught by the text itself. The youngsters were not interrupted as they read, and each recurrence of a new concept with its new label was in a slightly different context with more cues as to its meaning. For example, the sixth graders read a story in which the term *typical* occurred several times. The students' miscues on this word strongly suggest that they did not know what it meant when they first encountered it, but their retellings indicate that most of them had learned what it meant by the time they finished the story, even though most of the children still mispronounced it.

A third conclusion, probably the most important, echoes the findings of earlier miscue studies: The more the children knew about the

content, the easier it was for them to read and understand the material. For example, the fourth graders read a story in which a boy makes a flashlight in his cellar workshop and then sends it through a transom to his sister, who is shut in a dark closet. The Navajo fourth graders who read this had spent the preceding four years in a reservation boarding school; before that they had lived in hogans and trailer homes, none of which had cellars or transoms. The Navajo fourth graders thus lacked these concepts and the vocabulary for the concepts. The difficulties they had in producing semantically acceptable miscues (miscues that make sense in the story) and in correcting those miscues that were not semantically acceptable when they were reading about the flashlight demonstrate clearly the point – if we know what it's about, we can read it; if we don't, we'll have trouble.

In discussing the selection of culturally relevant materials K. and Y. Goodman (1978) repeat K. Goodman's earlier assertion (1967) that the more closely the background knowledge of the reader resembles that of the author, the easier it will be for the reader to comprehend the author's ideas.

This is not to say that reading is a process of understanding what a text says or what an author says. Meaning lies in the heads of the author and the reader, not on the page. Meaning does not go from the author's head to the reader's head by way of the text; Rosenblatt (1938, 1983) uses the term *transaction* to indicate the joining of reader and text into an organic unity, a unity in which both reader and text are changed. In *The Reader, the Text, the Poem* Rosenblatt (1978) says that the reader and the text together create the poem. She also points out that each piece of literature is unique to the person reading that piece at that time; every time we read a piece, it is different. Rosenblatt (1938) also addresses the question of how people manage to agree on what a text means, if each person's meaning is unique. She distinguishes public from private meaning. Each of us who has read Frost's "Stopping by the Woods on a Snowy Evening" has a private meaning for that piece of literature; many of us also share a public meaning, agreeing that Frost is talking about more than snow.

The consistent finding of the miscue research reviewed here – that the more young ESL readers know about the content of the material, the better they comprehend that material – is not a new idea. It is a commonsense notion. I cannot read the Chilton's manual that my daughter uses when she repairs my car, because I know so little about my car's insides; she, on the other hand, has trouble following many recipes that I recommend to her as easy, because she does little cooking. Some researchers have been interested in finding out if possible what it is that makes that commonsense notion a true one. Cognitive psychologists such as Rumelhart (1980) revived an idea first

expounded in 1932 by Bartlett: what we know about something is not only knowledge about its content, but about how the content is organized, its structure. Bartlett called this knowledge *schemata* (singular *schema*). Carrell and Eisterhold's (1983) "Schema Theory and ESL Reading Pedagogy" is a clear explanation of the concept of schema and how it relates to reading in ESL. To use the car repair example again, I don't have the right schemata for reading Chilton's: I don't know how my car works so I don't have the concepts or the vocabulary – the content – and I don't know how auto repair manuals are organized, so I don't have the structure.

Many studies have been carried out investigating the role of schema in reading comprehension. Most of them have used native speakers of English and have not dealt with second language as a factor in comprehension. Most of them have relied on college students in psychology classes to act as subjects, and not with children in elementary school settings. There are two studies which are particularly relevant to this report. The first is Kintsch and Greene (1978); the second is Steffensen, Joag-dev, and Anderson (1979). Kintsch and Greene were concerned with schemata for the structure of stories; Steffensen, Joag-dev, and Anderson with schemata for context. In this report I consider both sorts of schemata as I examine the readability of the materials used in this study. Briefly, Kintsch and Greene used 183 native English-speaking university students, asking them to read complete stories (about 1800 words long each) from *The Decameron* or from Alaskan Indian tales and, after reading, to write summaries. Kintsch and Greene conclude: "Reconstruction of a story with familiar schema is much easier than that of a story lacking such a schema ..." (1978, p. 13). Steffensen, Joag-dev, and Anderson asked a group of adults from India and a group of American adults to read letters about an Indian and an American wedding ceremony and to write "every bit of the letter" that they could remember afterwards (1979, p. 16). The results indicated clearly that the more familiar content was the easier to understand and to recall.

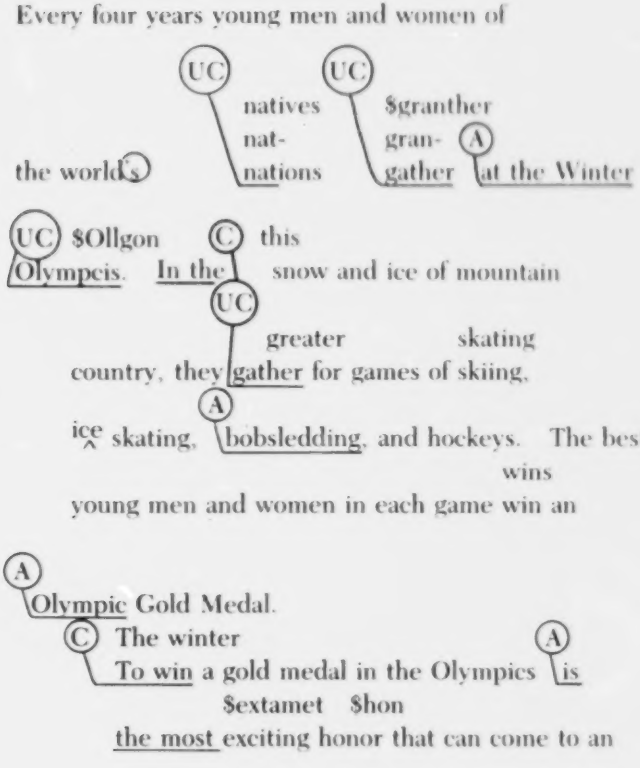
My theoretical perspective, then, is a holistic view of reading as a meaning-making process. The two sorts of research which are particularly applicable to this report are miscue analysis and schema-theory, both of which share my perspective.

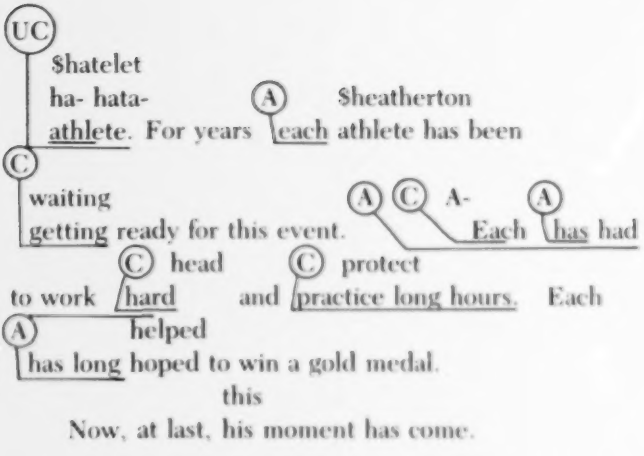
## Report of the Study

This study is related to Urzúa's long-term study of Southeast Asian children (Urzúa, 1986). She asked four refugee children to read aloud several stories and articles which were being used in the children's schools as measures of reading ability, and she asked each child to retell as much as possible. She tape recorded both the oral readings and the

retellings. I analyzed both using Y. Goodman and Burke's Reading Miscue Inventory (1972), or *RMI*. I will report the miscue analysis first; then I will examine the readability of the materials that the kids read.

Here is how one of the children, a boy named Khamla, read the piece entitled Winter Olympics; these are the first 100 words of that piece, which has fewer than 500 words.[1]






Khamla read the full text, both pages, much as he read this first section, and then told as much as he could recall. Analysis of his reading shows a mastery of the English sound-letter correspondence system. Most of Khamla's susbtitutions are spelled very much like the text items for which they are substituted:

| Khamla | Winter Olympics |
|---|---|
| natives | nations |
| $granther | gather |
| greater | gather |
| $extamet | exciting |
| $hon | honor |
| $hatalet | athlete |
| head | hard |
| protect | practice |
| helped | hoped |
| $livli | lively |
| armor | among |

The RMI's measure of how similarly substutions are spelled is called *graphic similarity*. On a scale of 0-100, Khamla's graphic similarity is 83, rather high. His score is lower on the other story he read, Wise Father. All four children have high graphic similarity figures.

| Reader | Story | Graphic Similarity |
|---|---|---|
| Khamla | Olympics | 83 |
| | Father | 70 |
| Sonkla | Olympics | 81 |
| | Father | 70 |
| Cham | Olympics | 90 |
| | Nightmare | 80 |
| Vuong | Nightmare | 90 |
| | Father | 82 |

The 90% graphic similarity figures for Cham and Vuong are quite high, suggesting that these students may be more concerned with accurate pronunciation of words than with the meaning of the story. Another measure, ***grammatical strength***, indicates how well the reader is using grammar to build meaning. Khamla's grammatical strength figures on both stories are quite low: 28 on Olympics; 24 on Father. These numbers indicate that Khamla's miscues result in structures that don't sound like English, and he does not and perhaps cannot correct them. This sentence, for example, is the first in Olympics as Khamla read it: "Every four years young men and women of the world natives $granther at the Winter $Ollgon." That doesn't make sense and it doesn't sound like English. The other students' grammatical strength results vary widely:

| Reader | Story | Grammatical Strength |
|---|---|---|
| Khamla | Olympics | 28 |
| | Father | 24 |
| Sonkla | Olympics | 81 |
| | Father | 70 |
| Cham | Olympics | 54 |
| | Nightmare | 30 |
| Vuong | Nightmare | 12 |
| | Father | 40 |

A third measure, called *no loss of comprehension*, gives a rough idea as to whether a reader's sentences make sense in the story. Khmala's no loss figures are identical for both stories, suggesting that he was building meaning on a sentence by sentence level about half the time. There is a wide difference in Vuong's no loss of comprehension figure on Father and on Nightmare, indicating that Father was much easier for him.

| Reader | Story | No Loss of Comprehension |
|---|---|---|
| Khamla | Olympics | 56 |
| | Father | 56 |
| Sonkla | Olympics | 67 |
| | Father | 60 |
| Cham | Olympics | 64 |
| | Nightmare | 54 |
| Vuong | Nightmare | 40 |
| | Father | 72 |

There are two more measures to review individually before looking at the full readers' profiles: retell and miscues per hundred words (MPHW).

The *retell* score is an indication of how well the student understood the whole story; it is a rough suggestion of comprehension at a global level, just as no loss of comprehension is an indication of comprehension at the sentence level. It is only a suggestion for two reasons: (a) comprehension is private and cannot ever be accurately measured, certainly not by telling someone what one has just read; (b) some researchers are very good at eliciting long, full accounts of a story, but others aren't. In one sense, then, a retell score indicates the ability of the researcher.

Miscue analysis focusses on quality, not on quantity of miscues, but in order to compare texts of different lengths, the MPHW measure is used. On a very short story a reader may have few miscues, just as on a very long story the reader might have a great many. MPHW is a measure that prevents the researcher from being misled by text length.

| Reader | Story | Retell | MPHW |
|---|---|---|---|
| Khamla | Olympics | 33 | 25 |
| | Father | 100 | 12.5 |
| Sonkla | Olympics | 71 | 7 |
| | Father | 94 | 3 |
| Cham | Olympics | 80 | 8 |
| | Nightmare | 23 | 6 |
| Vuong | Nightmare | 44 | 12 |
| | Father | 71 | 7 |

The diversity of these figures, not only among the different children, but between the stories, is startling. Khamla's retelling on Winter Olympics is only 33, quite low, suggesting that he did not comprehend much. On Wise Father his retelling is a prefect 100, an extremely rare score. If Khamla had read Wise Father months after reading Winter

Olympics, he could be proud of his improvement, but that was not the case: he read Father about 30 minutes before he read Olympics. Clearly, for Khamla, Father is more readable.

Many standard oral reading tests count the number of deviations from the text and stop the reader when he or she has made more than 10 errors per 100 words, judging the text too difficult. Khamla made 12.5 miscues per 100 words on Father, but his retell indicates that he comprehended the story exceptionally well. The RMI tells us that Olympics was probably too difficult for Khamla to read easily with good comprehension, but that Father, despite the many miscues, was quite readable for him.

Like Khamla, Sonkla made half as many MPHW on Father as she did on Olympics; like him, she retold Father better than she did Olympics. Judging from the MPHW figures for both children, Sonkla found both stories easier to read than Khamla did.

Cham read Olympics and a piece called A Famous Nightmare; obviously, for her Olympics was much easier to retell than Nightmare: her Retell score on Nightmare was only 23, but jumped to 80 on Olympics. The similarity between her MPHW figures on both stories shows that she made almost the same number of miscues on each text.

Like Cham, Vuong read Nightmare, and like Khamla and Sonkla, he read The Wise Father. Clearly, Nightmare was much more difficult for him: his Retell score is much lower and he made more MPHW.

No single RMI figure can be taken alone; each must be seen in the context of the reader's full profile. Here are the complete readers' profiles.

| Reader | Story | Retell | MPHW | No Loss of Comprehension | Grammatical Stength | Graphic Similarity |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Khamla | Olympics | 33 | 25 | 56 | 28 | 83 |
| | Father | 100 | 12.5 | 56 | 24 | 70 |
| Sonkla | Olympics | 71 | 7 | 67 | 67 | 81 |
| | Father | 94 | 3 | 60 | 60 | 70 |
| Cham | Olympics | 80 | 8 | 64 | 54 | 90 |
| | Nightmare | 23 | 6 | 54 | 30 | 80 |
| Vuong | Nightmare | 44 | 12 | 40 | 12 | 90 |
| | Father | 71 | 7 | 72 | 40 | 82 |

The profiles give us some indications of what strengths these ESL youngsters have in reading, and together with copies of the material they read, as they read it, indicate some of the strategies they are using. First, let me discuss briefly what we find out about each child's reading, then let me examine the texts themselves to see if the explana-

tion for the great differences in these scores lies in the texts rather than in the readers.

*Khamla*

We have already seen how Khamla read the first 100 words of Olympics. That text was extremely difficult for him (as the very high MPHW of 25 and the low retell of 33 indicate), but his no loss scores on both stories are identical, and his grammatical strength measures on both are almost identical. This indicates that, although the number of his miscues on Olympics is double that of the number on Wise Father, the types of miscues are the same. The no loss of comprehension and the grammatical strength measures are evidence that on both stories he is trying to make meaning as he slowly reads the text. Added to this information is the percentage of miscues that Khamla corrected – 20% on Olympics. As K. Goodman and Burke (1979) and later Goodman and Goodman (1978) point out, correction (regressing after a miscue in order to match the text) indicates that a reader is concerned with building meaning and is, at least some of the time, aware when meaning is being lost. We can see Khamla predicting, and when his prediction doesn't work out, regressing and correcting in these examples:

(C) this
In the snow and ice . . .
(C) The winter
To win a gold medal

(C) waiting
. . . each athlete has been getting ready . . .
(C) head (C) protect
. . . each has had to work hard and practice long hours.

Khamla's high graphic similarity scores on both stories indicate that he needs no further instruction on letter-sound relationships. With his excellent control of the English graphophonic system, Khamla tries to sound out words sometimes, as he did on *nations* and *gather*, but this is not an effective strategy, since it results in non-words like *$granther* and *$Ollgon*, or in real words spelled like those in the text, such as *natives* for *nations*, equally destructive of meaning. Khamla's graphic similarity figure on Father is markedly lower than it is for Olympics; taken with the retell score and the fewer number of miscues, this suggests that Khamla was able to focus more on meaning and less on accuracy in the Father story. This is how he read the first part of that story:

squirt
Once there was a mouse who searched everywhere to

$house-board (A) own dental
find a husband good enough for his only daughter.
(UC) dental
dent-
His daughter was a very beautiful mouse. Her fur was
(UC) $sketal, whatever
skinny
(A)
silvery-grey and very silky.

eye was long
Her eyes were large and

(UC) (UC) grateful Right.
bright and her tail was very slender and graceful.

"Who is good enough to marry our beautiful daughter?" the mouse asked his wife.

"She should marry the sun," said the wife.

"True!" said the father mouse. "The sun is he most powerful thing in the world. Only the sun is good enough for our daughter."

tell
He climbed up in the sky to talk to the sun.

"Oh, Great Sun," he said, "You may marry my
(UC) sign
daughter, since you are the most powerful
things
thing in the world.

"Thank you for the honor," said the sun, "but see
are
how the clouds can hide my face. I cannot shine
the
through a cloud, so a cloud must be
the most
more powerful than I am."

Khamla substituted *sign* for *since* all four times *since* occurred, and because that substitution destroyed the grammar of the sentence, it lowered his grammatical strength. By the time Khamla finished the story, however, his intonation strongly suggests that he was using *sign* as a clause connector. A weakness of the RMI is that, if a reader says a real English word (such as *sign*), the sentence must be analyzed as though that word had been used in its traditional function. *Sign* can be a noun or a verb, but not a conjunction. That means that Khamla's grammatical strength on Father, a very low 24, does not accurately reflect his control over the story's syntax.

The excerpt from Wise Father shows Khamla learning to read *daughter* from the text; in the last paragraph of the tale, Khamla also read *husband*. The recurrence of *daughter* with slightly different cues as to its meaning enabled Khamla to read it correctly the third time he encountered it, even though it was hyphenated and split into two.

Khamla's comments as he read Wise Father suggest that he felt comfortable. Miscuing on *silky* and unable to correct, Khamla said, "whatever," and went on; when he miscued on *graceful*, he said "grateful, grateful. Right." Perhaps he looked again at the word because it didn't make sense, but since all the letters seemed to be correct, he assumed that he was right in calling the mouse's tail grateful. There is a great deal of evidence in Khamla's miscues on Father that he is reading for meaning, especially as he gets into the story. These are two examples:

> Khamla: . . . a cloud must be the most powerful than I am.
> Text: . . . a cloud must be more powerful than I am.

> Khamla: The mouse climb up in the sky to tell the sun.
> Text: The mouse climbed up in the sky to talk to the sun.

*Sonkla*

Like Khamla, Sonkla read Olympics and Father; like him she made twice as many miscues on Olympics as on Father, and her retell of Father was noticeably better than her retell of Olympics. Like Khamla, she has a high graphic similarity percentage, although it is lower on Father, suggesting that she paid more attention to meaning and less to accurate decoding on Father. Sonkla has many fewer miscues than Khamla and much higher grammatical strength, showing these stories to be much easier for her to read than they were for Khamla. Transcripts of her reading demonstrate this: she miscued once on the first paragraph of Olympics, compared to Khamla's 20 miscues on the same section, and once on the first paragraph of Father. Here is an excerpt of Sonkla reading Father:

"Who is good enough to marry our beautiful daughters?"
the mouse asked his wife.
will
"She should marry the sun," said the wife.
"True!" said the father mouse . . .
"Oh, Great Sun," he said, "You may marry my
(C) beautiful
daughter, since you are the most powerful thing
in the world."

Sonkla read very slowly, which suggests that she was reading ahead silently, correcting any miscues she noticed silently, and thus producing an almost flawless oral reading performance. One cannot say that she read Father better than Khamla did: for all his miscues, his retell was 100%. If reading means building meaning from print, Khamla did this on Father as well or better than Sonkla.

*Cham*

Cham's reader profile on Olympics looks much like Sonkla's. Like her, Cham has a no loss in the 60's; like her, Cham's retell is quite respectable, 80. These numbers indicate that Cham understood Olympics. Her MPHW is much lower than Khamla's and her grammatical strength is higher, although not as high as Sonkla's. A graphic similarity of 90 suggests that Cham is too concerned with getting the letters right, particularly when the graphic figure is seen together with the grammatical strength of 54. This is how Cham read Olympics; this excerpt comes from the central section of the text:

$athlet
In the silent snow, one athlete steps out
in front of the crowd to say the Olympic
$Orth $Orth
Oath. He says the Oath for himself and
$athlets
all the athletes. Then several hundred
$pigons
pigeons swoop into the bright, cold sunshine.
UC $pigons
The pigeons are set free in honor of peace.

In the retell session, Cham was asked what the story meant when it said, "several hundred $pigons swoop into the bright sunshine," and she replied, "Probably the people who ski?" She is an excellent decoder, with full mastery over the English graphophonic system, but of course that doesn't help her build meaning. A concern for getting all the letters and their sounds right results in her producing non-words for *athlete* throughout the story. Someone less concerned with accurate decoding might have substituted *person* for *athlete* once it became clear to the reader what the concept was. It is possible, of course, that Cham does not know that she is producing a non-word; as Buck (1973) points out, the non-native speaker of the language may not be able to confirm the predictions made during reading.

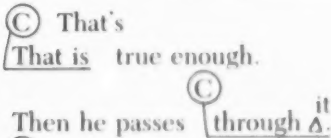
The second text that Cham read, A Famous Nightmare, was clearly much less readable for her than Olympics, as evidenced by a retell of 23. Cham read this text much more slowly than she had Olympics, probably silently correcting a great many miscues. Her MPHW is only 6; together with the no loss of 54 this suggests relative ease of reading, but the very low retell score belies this, and indicates that she was able to build very little meaning from this text, despite slow, careful reading and accurate decoding (Graphic Similarity of 80).

*Vuong*

The last student, Vuong, read Father and, like Khamla and Sonkla, found it much more readable than the other text he read. Vuong's retell of 71 on Father is respectable; his relatively high no loss of 72 indicates that he was generally successful at building meaning as he went through the text, sentence by sentence. This is a sample of his reading of Father:

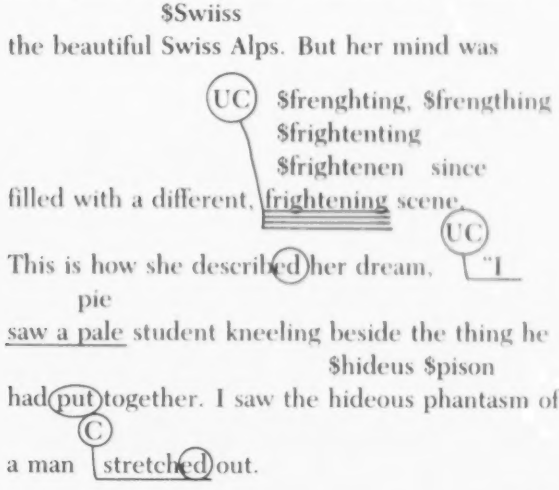
"Oh, Great Wind," said the mouse, "you may marry
C can't
my daughter, since you are so powerful. Nothing can
stop you. You must be the greatest thing in the world."
the
"Not I," said the wind. "See that wall? That wall
below below below
stops me. I blow and blow and blow, but I cannot push
C off
the wall out of my way. I cannot break through it."
The mouse thought for a little while and decided this

Vuong usually tries to correct miscues that destroy meaning, although he does nothing about his substitution of *below* for *blow*. Sometimes Vuong corrects miscues that do not need correction.




This sort of overcorrection does not hurt comprehension, but it is inefficient reading and suggests a greater concern for accuracy than for understanding.

Vuong's reading of Nightmare illustrates what often happens when a reader like him encounters an extremely difficult text: reliance on the graphophonic system goes up and grammatical strength drops to a nadir of 12. This is how Vuong read the first paragraph:


One night, more than 100 years ago, a young
woman could not sleep. She was in her own room
in a house beside a lake. Outside her window were
$Swiiss
the beautiful Swiss Alps. But her mind was
UC
$frenghting, $frengthing
$frightenting
$frightenen since
filled with a different, frightening scene.
This is how she described her dream, UC "I
pie
saw a pale student kneeling beside the thing he
$hideus $pison
had put together. I saw the hideous phantasm of
C
a man stretched out.

Vuong made five attempts at *frightening*, each substitution showing his mastery of the graphophonic system. A more effective strategy would have been to omit it. Vuong seldom omits; most of his miscues are substitutions, and most of these are spelled very like the text item; many of them are non-words.

| Vuong | Nightmare |
|---|---|
| $Swiis | Swiss |
| $frightenen | frightening |
| since | scene |
| pie | pale |
| $hideus | hideous |
| $pison | phantasm |
| $horriid | horrid |
| beside | bedside |
| pot | poet |

Vuong's RMI on Father shows how he handles text that is relatively easy for him to read. Someone hearing him read it aloud would understand the story because what he is saying makes sense most of the time and sounds like English. He is a little too concerned with accuracy of decoding: we can see this from the overcorrection and the 82% graphic similarity. His RMI on Nightmare shows him gamely struggling with a text that is, for him, much less readable than Father. He relies on his ability to decode, to sound out words, and there is a consequent drop in grammaticality and semantic acceptability.

All four of these children are clearly reading for meaning, but Cham and Vuong seem overly concerned with exactness. All four of them tend to rely on the graphophonic system too much. The ideal reader uses the semantic system and the pragmatic system as the primary cuing systems, and samples the graphophonic system to confirm predictions based on cues of meaning. These children seem a little too concerned with exactness and accuracy. They need to relax, to feel that they "own" the material they are reading. If children think that a reading assignment is primarily an oral performance for the purpose of teacher evaluation, they will read very carefully, with a tendency to overcorrect; the results will be high graphic similarity figures. That is what we have here.

### Analysis of Texts

When we look at the readers' profiles on these three stories, we see that Wise Father was the most readable for these children, Winter Olympics was less so, and Famous Nightmare even less so. These three

stories come from basal readers and are fair examples of materials written to readability formulas.[2]

*Readability*

These three texts were prepared in accordance with a readability formula which dictates (a) the average number of words per sentence and the allowable number of words having three or more sylables (Fry, 1968), or (b) the average number of words per sentence and the allowable number of infrequently used words (Dale & Chall, 1948). Fry (1968) and Dale-Chall (1948) are the most commonly used formulas; there are many others. The basic assumption underlying any readability formula is that meaning is in the print, in the text. There is no recognition that meaning is created by each reader as the reader engages with the text. Based on this is the assumption that ease of reading is a matter of how long the sentences are and how long or how familiar the words are. No readability formula can or tries to indicate discourse structures. That is, no formula can distinguish between Chilton's auto repair manual and Childs' French cookbook.

The only indicator of grammatical complexity that a readability formula has is length of sentence; however, as K. Goodman (1984) points out, *See Spot run* is grammatically more complex although shorter than *I see Spot over there* (p. 109).

The assumption that longer words are more difficult to read than short ones comes from a theory of reading which holds that reading is a process of turning letters into sounds, then recognizing those sounds as words, and finally deriving meaning from the words (Gough, 1972). Those who subscribe to the theory of reading propounded by Goodman and Goodman, Smith, and other psycholinguists disagree: we view reading as a meaning-making process which uses cues from all the language systems, and therefore we do not see word-length as an indicator of difficulty.

Gourley (1984) used miscue analysis with native speakers of English in the first grade to compare the readability of a basal textbook with a trade book. Basals differ from trade books in several ways. Basals are usually not written by one author, but by several people—editors, consultants, and writers—who work more or less together, often with adjacent offices in a publishing firm. Trade books, on the other hand, have authors. Basals are designed for classes in which everyone reads the same thing; trade books are designed to be read in and out of class individually. Basals are written to readability formulas, with consequent restrictions on sentence length and vocabulary. Gourley found the basals to be less readable than the trade books. She concluded: "In the effort to simplify texts to meet conventional readability criteria,

publishers frequently violate higher-order principles for structuring natural discourse" (1984, p. 170). These higher-order principles include the organization of content so that it fits commonly held schemata. Hetherington (1985) argues similarly that the present practices of determining readability by focusing on linguistic characteristics ignores the interactive nature of reading; that is, it ignores what the reader brings, and she presents an alternative, a checklist of factors to consider when determining the suitability of a text for a specific reader or group of readers.

The purpose of a readability formula is to assign a grade level to a text. The Fry formula assigns a grade level of 3 to Wise Father, 5 to Winter Olympics, and 6 to Nightmare. What does *grade level* mean? It is something we see on most elementary schoolbooks: a 5 on the spine of a social studies text means that it is written to a Fry or other readability formula in order to make the text readable for fifth graders. No one believes that all fifth graders read the same way. The fifth grade teachers certainly know better. But a teacher will often say of a student that the student is not reading at grade level. Sometimes a librarian will stop a child from checking out a book that the librarian says is above the child's grade level in reading difficulty. What are the publisher, the teacher, the librarian talking about when they say *grade level?*

### *Grade Level Definitions*

There are two sorts of grade levels: one is the grade level assigned by readability formula; the other is a student's score on a standardized test. Let's look at each briefly.

The Fry readability formula (1968) counts the number of sentences and syllables for three 100 word sections of a text; the averages of these are then read off a chart which assigns a grade level. Where did Fry (and other authors of readability formulas) get the information that so many syllables per 100 words, or so many familiar/unfamiliar words and so many sentences per 100 words correlate with what children in a certain grade could read? Bruce, Rubin and Starr (1981) traced back readability formulas; they point out that current readability formulas are validated on other formulas, and these in turn trace back to *McCall-Crabbs Standard Tests in Reading*.

> *McCall-Crabbs* lessons were intended only as practice lessons in reading, never as measures of comprehension or text comprehensibility; nor were they intended to be general indicators of reading ability...Nevertheless, the most respected formulas have all used the *McCall-Crabbs* lessons as the criterion of difficulty.
>
> (Bruce, Rubin & Starr, 1981, p. 4)

This means that it's all a house of cards.

What about grade-level as measured by standardized tests of reading ability? Farr's *Reading: What Can Be Measured?* (1969, new edition forthcoming, 1985) points out some of the weaknesses of standardized reading tests. The standardization process involves giving the test to a great many students, the more the better, and 65% of the fifth graders, for example, whose scores are closest to the median establish Fifth Grade Level on that test. So if Sonkla is told that she reads at grade level 5, it means that on the standardized test that her school system uses, her score fell within one standard deviation of the median.

As long ago as 1908, Edmund Huey wrote about the individual nature of each reader's relationship with the text. Betts (1957) insisted three decades ago that within any classroom there was a great range of proficiency and of interests, and therefore, Betts advocated individualized reading. No publisher nor formula could decide what was readable for all individuals in one room, much less in one grade. Recent and current researchers in first language reading continually assert that the meaning of any text is determined by who is reading it. So why is the concept of reading level still used, with its concomitant standardized tests, to measure reading level and schoolbooks written to formulas? The question may be unanswerable, but at least two factors spring to mind as likely causes. The first is cultural inertia; the second is simplicity. Cultural inertia refers to the widespread belief, in and out of schools, that there is such a thing as grade level readability and reading ability. Changing the public view of reading is a herculean task, one that not all the combined forces of reading researchers from Huey through K. Goodman have been able to accomplish.

Simplicity is the second probable factor: a simple answer is an easy one. Within the last 10 years the pressure on teachers and schools to be accountable has resulted in an increase in testing, especially in minimal competency tests. A score on a paper-and-pencil test may have no real connection to what a student can do, but that score, that number, has a magic of its own. When a principal wants to prove that students are progressing, those numbers are proof. If a teacher wants to confer with a student's parents, both students and parents may say, "I don't have a lot of time. Can't you just tell me the test results? Is the kid reading on grade level or not?"

*Organization and Content of Texts Used in This Study*

Let's look at the texts that these four Southeastern Asian children read.

The Wise Father has a structure that we all recognize: the central

character has a goal and overcomes repeated obstacles in order to reach that goal. The father mouse wants to find a husband for his daughter and after interviewing the sun, a cloud, the wind and a wall, he decides that the most suitable suitor is a mouse, since it is more powerful than all these, being able to nibble through a wall. The obstacles that the father overcomes are very similar: each time he thinks he has found the perfect mate for his daughter, he is told, "There is something more powerful than I." Thus, not only are the events repetitious, but so are the phrases. Wise Father resembles "Three Little Pigs", "Three Billy Goats Gruff", and "The Three Bears" in its repetition of almost identical events and phrasing. It is like "The Old Woman and the Pig" in the chaining of events. (An old woman wanted a pig to cross a stile, but in order to accomplish this, she had to institute a chain of events—water threatened to quench fire; fire threatened to burn stick; stick threatened to beat pig.) The first paragraph of The Wise Father sets up the major character and his goal; for readers who are familiar with the structure of fairy tales, the first paragraph alerts them to what can be expected. That is, the reader's schema for folk tales is alerted, and that schema predicts a series of obstacles with final success. Thus, after the first paragraph and, for many readers, after the first phrase, "once there was," the basic plot is predictable. After reading the encounter that the mouse has with the sun, it is easier to read the encounter that he has with a cloud, and that makes it easier still to read the encounter with the wind, and so on. The Wise Father text teaches itself because it draws on the reader's ability to predict, and that ability comes from the reader's having appropriate background of both topic and form.

The four children in this study have stories like The Wise Father told to them and read to them both at school and at home. For them, Father is predictable in both structure and content.

Winter Olympics is a different story. It begins like a report, not a narrative. The beginning sounds much like the descriptions found in elementary school social studies texts:

> Every four years young men and women of the world's nations gather at the Winter Olympics. In the snow and ice of mountain country, they gather for games of skiing, skating, bobsledding, and hockey. The best young men and women in each game win an Olympic Gold Medal.

The present tense is used to indicate habitual action in the first paragraph and in the first sentence of the second. Then the tense shifts to present perfect; the third paragraph is a single sentence which keeps the present perfect tense but shifts the meaning of it from past duration to present moment: "Now, at last, his moment has come." The fourth

paragraph shifts tense again; this time it uses the simple present, but this time the present does not indicate habitual action, but ongoing action. "High in the mountains people are gathered. Flags . . . wave" and so on. The attempt is to give the reader the feeling of actually being there. The use of present tense for two different times continues throughout the text, shifting back and forth from habitual to ongoing action. Native speakers of the language can be expected to have a bit of difficulty reading this sort of thing. Goodman and Goodman (1978) examined some of the syntactically caused problems that affected both native speakers of English and ESL speakers. One of the stories, Freddie Miller, has been used in several miscue studies, and every child who has read Freddie Miller has miscued on the following two sentences:

> After the cut in his allowance, Freddie's chemistry experiments narrowed to those safely outlined in a library book.
>
> "In the hall closet," came Elizabeth's tearful reply.

In the first sentence, it is not just sentence length and unusual vocabulary that forces miscues. The opening phrase "after the cut in his allowance" is often read as "after he cut his . . .," understandably so, since we predict an adverbial clause with *cut* as the subject. Actually, the phrase means after the cut in his allowance had been made by his mother. The rest of the sentence is equally syntactically treacherous: the boy's experiments *narrowed*; a library book outlined experiments in a safe way.

The syntactic traps in the second sentence are obvious. Freddie calls, "Where are you?" and "In the hall closet," Elizabeth replies. But the text has the girl's reply *coming*, so *reply* is a noun instead of the predicted verb; and the reply is tearful instead of Elizabeth being tearful.

Syntactic traps force native speakers of English into miscues; we can expect ESL speakers to have at least as much difficulty with those structures.

The larger structures may also cause problems. About two-thirds of the way through Winter Olympics, the journalistic style shifts to a story-like narrative. The next paragraphs show where this shift occurs, and where the text shifts back.

| | |
|---|---|
| journalistic | As the time comes for the games to begin, the athletes become more and more excited. Their thoughts turn to one thing only – the games that are to come. They wish that they could get away from the crowd and the judges to practice one more time. Then the Olympic games begin. And one of these games is the ski-jumping event. |
| story-like narrative | With great speed, a skier trails down a slide, raised high above the ground. As he leaves the end of the slide, he is shot high into the air, his body pointed over his skis. He must try to jump farther than any . . . How exciting and dangerous! |
| journalistic | Yes, dangerous it is. But danger doesn't scare the athletes. No event at the Winter Olympics seems too dangerous for them. |

Although there are two instances in which Olympics refers to a single athlete, he is both times nameless, faceless, and characterless. The first occasion is the third paragraph; here are paragraphs two and three to indicate the reader's potential problem:

> To win a gold medal in the Olympics is the most exciting honor that can come to an athlete. For years each athlete has been getting ready for this event. Each has had to work hard and practice long hours. Each has long hoped to win a gold medal.
>
> Now, at last, his moment has come.

Whose moment? Figuring out that the referent for *his* is *each athlete* is a rather tricky syntactic problem, especially for second language learners who may have difficulty with *each* as an indicator of *everyone*, *all*, and doubly difficult for those who miscue on *athlete* (as these readers did).

These are some of the problems, then, with Winter Olympics. The large structure shifts back and forth from expository prose into story-like narrative; the tenses shift both form and function; some of the pronominal referents are hard to trace. Do American students expect this kind of prose? Have they the appropriate schemata for reading this kind of thing? I don't know. I know that Olympics was hard for the

children in this study to read, and I suspect that it is the fault of the text.

Background knowledge of the competitive sports that occur at a winter Olympics, and knowledge of the Olympic games themselves helps one to read this. We have indications that Khamla did not have that background information in his low retell and high MPHW. Sonkla and Cham were both able to bring some knowledge of the Olympic games to the reading. Both of them commented to the researcher that they had watched some of the summer Olympics, then being held in Los Angeles, on TV. Here is Cham's unaided retelling; that is, the portion of the retelling before the researcher asked any questions.

> Every four year young mens, men and women, gather, and they practice for the Olympic. Each one of them hope that they'll win. They practice for long hours. Then they, then the time comes and that person lits the flame that stands for peace. The men and women wish they could get away from the people and judges to practice once more. (pause) They did the high, uh, the ski-jumping. The one who jumps the farthest win that, have a straight landing, a good landing. And other games were hookey, skating, ski-jumping, bobsliding, and others, other events. The one who win the Gold Medal means they're the best World Athlete.

When the researcher asked about *hookey*, Cham said that she had played it herself, and then she described field hockey.

The third story, A Famous Nightmare, was the most difficult for these children to read. They had lower retell scores and produced fewer grammatically and semantically acceptable sentences. Cham, whose retelling on Olympics indicates a fine ability to build meaning even from a poorly written text, scored a low 23 on her retell of Nightmare. This is the first paragraph of that text:

> One night, more than 100 years ago, a young woman could not sleep. She was in her own room in a house beside a lake. Outside her window were the beautiful Swiss Alps. But her mind was filled with a different, frightening scene. This is how she described her dream, "I saw a pale student kneeling beside the thing he had put together. I saw the hideous phantasm of a man stretched out."

What sort of text is this? Is it a journal report, a social studies textbook excerpt, a biographical note, a short story, or what? I have asked this question of several people; they have all said that this first paragraph leads them to predict a narrative that could be a biography,

but sounds more like fiction to them. Those people activate their schema for narrative fiction; they expect to find a short story as they read on. Here is the next paragraph:

> She went on: "The horrid thing stands at his bedside, opening his curtains, and looking on him with yellow, watery eyes."

Who is stretched out? Whose bedside? Who is standing? Who is kneeling? Who is looking at whom? Again, what is this text about? We know from the first paragraph that the setting, the Swiss Alps, is important; otherwise they would not have been mentioned in a text that is only 429 words long. We can guess from the title, A Famous Nightmare, that this story will have something to do with a dream. But by the time we get to those curtains, it's hard to know where we are. How can the horrid thing be standing at his (whose?) bedside and still be opening the curtains? Is the horrid thing leaning across a bed that is next to a window? But the previous paragraph had the thing stretched out and the student kneeling. Is the thing in bed, and is the student the horrid thing in some Jekyll and Hyde way? Whoever is in bed, does he have curtains on the bed itself, as Scrooge did? Let's read the next sentence; maybe it will clear up some of this confusion.

> The next morning the woman described that ghostly scene to the two people with whom she was sharing the lovely Swiss house.

There is another indication of how important the Swiss setting is to the tale, but not much clarification of our confusion.

The full text of A Famous Nightmare is included in the appendix to this paper; a look at it will show that halfway through, on the second page, there finally is a mention of *Frankenstein*. The structure of the text shifts from narrative to expository, and there is a plot summary of the book *Frankenstein* and an exposition of how famous the story has become. It is no wonder that Cham retold Nightmare like this:

> Mary Shelley had a dream about a monster. (pause) She told some of the people and then they told her to write a story. They thought it would make a good story. Mary Shelley decided to make the story really scarey. (pause) That's it.

These three stories make different demands on their readers' background knowledge. Wise Father requires a background knowledge that almost all people around the world have, namely, that parents

want their children to find good spouses. The structure is well known by these ESL readers; it is that of the folk tale. Winter Olympics needs some previous knowledge of the Olympic games, but the descriptions of the parade and of the ski jump refer to the sort of information that TV viewers around the world have. The structure of Olympics shifts and therefore breaks the implicit contract between author and reader, thus making the reading harder. Nightmare demands the most specific knowledge: a reader who doesn't have the background information that Mary Shelley wrote *Frankenstein* must read more than half of the text to discover what it is about. More, Nightmare requires that the reader know the story of *Frankenstein*. Like Olympics, Nightmare shifts its structure: it starts as a narrative and shifts to the sort of exposition that is appropriate to a book jacket.

All of this explains, I think, why the four children who read these texts within the same week have such diverse RMI results.

## Implications

At a plenary session at TESOL '85, Krashen (1985) asserted that reading, just simple silent sustained reading of self-selected material, would transform students – both first and second language students –into good readers, pretty good writers, and even into better spellers. Almost every elementary teacher that I know, whether in first or second language classrooms, already knows the benefits of giving their students time to read what they want. But teachers also know that they are asked increasingly to hand their students nonsense like A Famous Nightmare, because it has been written to a standardized readability grade level and appears in a standard textbook, a basal. Think of Khamla struggling with Winter Olympics; think of the relative ease with which he read Wise Father. Is it fair to ask him to read more texts like Winter Olympics because it has a fifth grade readability level and he is in the fifth grade? What of all the Khamlas in our classrooms?

The presidents of the National Council for Teachers of English and of the International Reading Association issued a joint statement on readability (Cullinan & Fitzgerald, 1985) in which they point out many of the same problems that I've indicated in my analysis of the texts in this study. That statement requests publishers not to use readability formulas as a controlling factor in children's books, especially in the widely used basals; and it requests teachers and principals not to use readability formulas as guidelines in selecting materials. If Khamla's teacher is in a position to select the material that Khamla will read, what criteria should the teacher use? This study and all the previous miscue studies, as well as the research on schemata, suggest that Khamla's reading material should have content that is familiar enough

so that it makes some sense to him. The material should have some recognizable structure, whether it be that of a folk tale, of a set of instructions, or whatever. The structure should not shift back and forth; that makes the reader's schemata of little help in predicting. Hetherington (1985) has developed a checklist of factors to consider when selecting materials; the list is short, clear, and easy for both researcher and teacher to follow. Probably Khamla himself can participate in the selection of some of his reading material, particularly if his class is going to have a quiet time for everyone to read. All of the students, not just the Khamlas in our schools, would profit from this.

All four of the children in this study need to read silently rather than orally, because their RMI profiles show that they are overly concerned with exactness and performance. Silent reading should lessen their concern for displaying their reading at the same time that it speeds up the reading.

All of these children need plenty of opportunities to act on their reading in some way. Retelling to one another is one way; there are many others. If Khamla were responsible for the classroom gerbils, for example, he could read about the care and feeding of gerbils and put the advice he finds there into practice. If Sonkla were organizing a girls' group, she might use their horoscopes in setting up offices and duties in their club ("You're a Pisces, so you should . . .") If Cham and Vuong were preparing a demonstration of a science experiment, they would be acting on material presented in their science textbook.

This study has three more implications, both for those whose primary interest is language teaching, and for those whose primary interest is language study. First, we need to be cautious about any statements we make about someone's reading ability or reading strategies if those statements are based on only one text. We need to be careful that any text we ask people to read for us is readable, not in any formulaic sense, but in having a content and a structure that is sensible to the readers themselves. Otherwise we are not finding out how these people read: we may be finding out how they take tests or how they perform as research subjects, but we're not getting information on their reading.

Second, those of us who work with children need to be careful about generalizing to adults, and vice versa. Those who carry out research with university students in ESL classes need to remember that their results may have little or no validity in the context of elementary school children learning English in a bilingual classroom. I wish that never again would I read a research report carried out on adults in a university ESL class concluding "ESL learners do so and so."

Third, the more we know about the people we teach and the people who do us the favor of acting as research participants, the better.

Urzua's paper in this volume speaks directly to this point, but I mention it here because it has special importance to reading. Reading does not happen in a vacuum; it is more than an interaction between a reader and a text. Rosenblatt (1985) has this to say:

> "Context" takes on scope and importance from the transactional view of the reading event as a unique coming-together of a particular personality and a particular text at a particular time and place under particular circumstances-...Not only what the reader brings to the transaction from past experience with life and language, but also the socially molded circumstances and purpose of reading, provide the setting for the act of symbolization. The reading event should be seen in its total matrix. (1985, p. 104)

Last, we need to be aware that our perspectives determine in some part what we see; we need to remember that the observer is part of the observation. Rosenblatt could be speaking to teachers as well as to researchers when she makes the following statement:

> The assumptions the investigator brings, the relationship between investigator and subject, the past experiences of the subjects and their understanding of the situation, the extent to which their present activities reflect past indoctrinations, the practical institutional, professional and political influences present in the situation—such concerns apply no matter what the particular research methodology. (1985, p. 105)

We can substitute "teacher" for "investigator" and "student" for "research subject" in this excerpt, because her point applies to teachers and researchers. We need to recognize that we ourselves are part of the contexts in which our students (or research subjects) develop language. That recognition can lead us to check our perspectives with those of others, and perhaps, to integrate perspectives.

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# Appendix

*These stories were prepared in 1985 by Gene Jongsma at the Center for Reading Improvement, Dallas, Texas.*

## A Famous Nightmare

One night, more than 100 years ago, a young woman could not sleep. She was in her own room in a house beside a lake. Outside her window were the beautiful Swiss Alps. But her mind was filled with a different, frightening scene. This is how she described her dream, "I saw a pale student kneeling beside the thing he had put together. I saw the hideous phantasm of a man stretched out."

She went on: "The horrid thing stands at his bedside, opening his curtains, and looking on him with yellow, water eyes."

The next morning the woman described the ghostly scene to the two people with whom she was sharing the lovely Swiss house. One was her husband, the poet Percy Shelley. The other was the poet Lord Byron. Both men agreed that Mary Shelley's dream had the makings of a good ghost story. Lord Byron had already suggested that they write ghost stories to read to each other.

Mary Shelley took this idea seriously. Everyday she shut herself up in her room and wrote for hours. She wanted to write a book that would make her readers' spines tingle with fear. And she believed that her story could not fail to do that. It would be about a human being who makes a monster, a thing that has life. Mary Shelley believed that if people could do this, they would find the deed so terrible that they would run away from their monster. Then she asked herself, what would the thing do?

By now you may know the name of this ghost story. Mary Shelley named her book *Frankenstein*. Doctor Frankenstein was the person who was able to make a monster.

In Mary Shelley's book, Dr. Frankenstein does run away from his terrible monster. But the monster tells its maker that it would live in peace and never destroy anything anymore if only it had something to love. Dr. Frankenstein decides to make a second monster as a friend for the first one. But then he asks himself, what might two such living things do to people? Would making a second monster be too dangerous? Would it be too great a chance to take? He decides that it would be.

Mary Shelley's story was a success from the day it appeared. Since then it has been read by millions of people. It has been made into at

least five motion pictures. Some of these movies are frightening. Others make fun of Dr. Frankenstein and his monster. But whether frightening or comic, Mary Shelley's nightmare lives on.

## The Wise Father

Once there was a mouse who searched everywhere to find a husband good enough for his only daughter. His daughter was a very beautiful mouse. Her fur was silvery-gray and very silky. Her eyes were large and bright and her tail was very slender and graceful.

"Who is good enough to marry our beautiful daughter?" the mouse asked his wife.

"She should marry the sun," said the wife.

"True!" said the father mouse. "The sun is the most powerful thing in the world. Only the sun is good enough for our daughter."

The mouse climbed up in the sky to talk to the sun.

"Oh, Great Sun," he said, "you may marry my daughter, since you are the most powerful thing in the world."

"Thank you for the honor," said the sun, "but see how the clouds can hide my face. I cannot shine through a cloud, so a cloud must be more powerful than I am."

The mouse thought about this and decided it must be true. So he went to a very large cloud that was passing across the sky.

"Oh, Great Cloud," he said, "you may marry my daughter, since you are so very powerful."

"Something else is more powerful than I am," said the cloud. "Feel the wind. The wind pushes me all about the sky. I cannot go where I want to. I have to go where the wind pushes me."

The mouse thought about this for a little while. He decided that the wind must be greater than the cloud so he ran very fast across the sky until he caught up with the wind.

"Oh, Great Wind," said the mouse, "you may marry my daughter, since you are so powerful. Nothing can stop you. You must be the greatest thing in the world."

"Not I," said the wind. "See that wall? That wall stops me. I blow and blow and blow, but I cannot push the wall out of my way. I cannot break through it."

The mouse thought for a little while and decided this was true. So he dropped down out of the sky and went to the wall.

"Oh, Great Wall," said the mouse, "you may marry my daughter, since you are so strong. You can stop the wind, even when it blows very hard."

"That is true enough," said the wall, "and yet I cannot stop a mouse.

A mouse can nibble and gnaw at me till he makes a hole. Then he passes through. A mouse must be more powerful than I am. Perhaps your daughter should marry a mouse."

"What a splendid idea!" said the mouse. "I never thought of that!" So he went back home again where he found a handsome young gentleman mouse with long whiskers for his daughter to marry. This made the daughter very happy.

"You have found the perfect husband for me," she said. "What a wise father you are!"

## Winter Olympics

Every four years young men and women of the world's nations gather at the Winter Olympics. In the snow and ice of mountain country, they gather for games of skiing, skating, bobsledding, and hockey. The best young men and women in each game win an Olympic Gold Medal.

To win a gold medal in the Olympics is the most exciting honor that can come to an athlete. For years each athlete has been getting ready for this event. Each has had to work hard and practice long hours. Each has long hoped to win a gold medal.

Now, at last, his moment has come.

High in the mountains people are gathered. Flags of many nations wave in the cold air while a band plays lively music. One by one the athletes march into the snow and stand, each behind the flag of his nation.

Suddenly a skier swoops down a nearby mountainside, carrying the Olympic Torch. He is cheered by the crowd as he lights the Olympic Flame, which stands for peace among the world's nations. When the flame is lit, voices sing the beautiful Olympic Song.

In the silent snow, one athlete steps out in front of the crowd to say the Olympic Oath. He says the oath for himself and all the athletes. Then several hundred pigeons swoop into the bright, cold sunshine. The pigeons are set free in honor of peace.

As the time comes for the games to begin, the athletes become more and more excited. Their thoughts turn to one thing only – the games that are to come. They wish that they could get away from the crowd and judges to practice one more time. Then the Olympic games begin. And one of these games is the ski-jumping event.

With great speed, a skier trails down a slide, raised high above the ground. As he leaves the end of the slide, he is shot high into the air, his body pointed over his skies. He must try to jump farther than any other skier. He must hold his strong body very steady for a fine landing at the

bottom of the jump. Any lively gust of wind could send him crashing down with the speed of a man falling from a tall building. How exciting and dangerous!

Yes, dangerous it is. But danger doesn't scare the athletes. No event at the Winter Olympics seems too dangerous for them. They keep trying to win a gold medal in games of hockey, ski-jumping, bobsledding, skating, and other events. The gold medal means they are the world's best athletes.

## Footnotes

[1]The marking system is as follows: underlining indicates a repeated item, substitutions are written above; ^ indicates an insertion; ◯ indicates an omission. (C) means that the reader regressed after a miscue and matched the text, corrected the miscue. (UC) means the reader reread but was unsuccessful at matching the text. (AC) means the reader abandoned the text item(s) in rereading. (A) means the reader reread without deviating from the text. A $ before a word indicates that this is not an English word. A hyphen is used to indicate a partial word.

[2]Jongsma (1985) selected these from several basal texts in order to amass a set of graded passages to use in evaluating reading ability. His set has been used in the Portland, Oregon, area schools for several years; few of the people using the set seem to know its history. The set was given Urzúa with the assurance that it was used with the RMI throughout the area.

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# A Children's Story

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# A Children's Story

Once upon a time there were four children who lived in a far away part of the earth. They did not know each other, but each one suffered terror and grief as their families were caught in political upheavals in their countries. One by one, each family took a few belongings and left their homelands in Southeast Asia, hoping and praying that life would be better in a new land.

They turned their faces toward the west, eventually finding safety in a city in the northwestern part of America. Then they set about learning new ways and a new language, English.

The four children enrolled in school. Two of the children, both girls, were placed in the second grade. One girl was called Cham. A fragile, pale child who rarely initiated any kind of interaction, Cham was placed in a classroom where signs proudly proclaimed that independent workers are those who "work quietly" and "ask questions during question times." Cham worked hard, engrossed in workbooks which demanded that she circle pronouns in sentences and alphabetize the names of animals. While rarely speaking in class discussions, even when she had all the answers, Cham nevertheless had friends among the other children. She liked whispering to them and finding answers to questions with which they had trouble. Cham kept the materials for school carefully organized in her desk, and when she was finished with one project, she would remove another one and begin working on that. Occasionally growing tired, she would stare off into space, twisting her shoulder-length, shiny hair.

The other girl, named Sonkla, changed schools three times in the elementary grades. Dressed in designer jeans and Nike shoes, and constantly swishing her waist-length black hair, Sonkla found many friends among other ESL children and spunkily organized group sessions. She sometimes complained about assignments which she regarded as too difficult, and frequently questioned the helpfulness of activities. But Sonkla was quick and bright, and had a great sense of humor. The school authorities, after two years, promoted her from the fourth grade to the sixth, where she began making straight A's (except in social studies).

The other two children were boys, and they were placed in the fourth grade, although one of them, Vuong, was at first assigned to the sixth grade, before being moved back after three months. Vuong liked

school because he had lots of friends and was particularly good at getting a group of boys together at recess and playing basketball. A slender boy of medium-height, his history, especially the long separation from his father and the slow, fatal illness of his mother, has etched itself onto his bronze face. Although not shy with his friends, Vuong rarely went to the teacher for help, even though most of what he read and worked on contained vocabulary and concepts for which he had no image. His teachers rarely went to his desk to see if he understood the directions, comprehended the reading passage, or recognized the kind of workbook activity he was required to do. When he filled in workbook activities, or wrote sentences using the grammar goal for the day, he frequently muttered, "Mine are all wrong," and began recopying the words onto another page. Every week at certain times, Vuong picked up a little black case and walked into a room. A few minutes later he could be seen doing one of his most pleasurable activities: learning to play the violin.

The fourth boy, Khamla, enjoyed being at school where he learned to be a good friend to nearly all of the children. He too had moved to three different schools, but he had an athletic build, a quick smile and a sharp sense of humor, and the boys liked having him sit at their table. Khamla kept his jacket on during the day, and as the weather grew warmer people began telling him to take it off. Once in a while in a small group he did remove the heavy, dirty jacket, and then the group saw that his shirt had huge tears in the sleeves. Although quick to speak when with friends, Khamla rarely spoke in class, watching how and when the other children responded to the teacher's various leads. Frequently he would raise his hand just as the teacher was calling on another student to respond to her question. Although the desks in Khamla's classroom were arranged in squares of four and the children in these squares frequently talked among themselves about the assignments they were doing, Khamla did not follow the conversations. Instead, he painstakingly worried himself through pages and pages of dictionary definitions, copying them word by word onto his ditto sheets.

Also in this part of America was a Researcher at The College. When she learned that these four children had been in school for two years, she said to herself, "I should try to understand how the children are learning English, and what they are doing in their classes." So at 9 o'clock one bright morning, she arrived at the school, and began talking to the teachers.

"Oh," said the four teachers. "The children have already been in school for two years. They have learned English very well. They understand everything we say to them."

The Researcher was amazed, and very pleased that the children had

accomplished such a complex task. Perhaps she had arrived too late to understand how the children were learning English. But a fifth teacher, one Wiser and more Experienced, said, "Ah, but that is only one small part of the picture. Even though these four children seem to do well in conversational situations where the context gives them clues as to the meaning being conveyed, they have difficulty in situations where the context is more abstract and where they must rely more on their knowledge of the language itself and the school context to get the meaning. If you are going to be accurate and comprehensive, if you want to see the whole picture, then you must look at aspects of their language experience in school other than the conversational situations." That made sense to The Researcher, so she raced to the permanent files, finding the results of the latest achievement tests. Although there were significant changes over the two years the children had been in school, the two girls were in the 30th and 45th percentile on the SRA Reading test, Khamla was in the 3rd percentile, and teachers assumed that Vuong's ability was so low he wasn't even given the test.

"This makes a very different picture," said The Researcher. "That Wise Teacher is right. I must see many language experiences these children are having before I can draw any conclusions."

And so at 10:15 the next morning, The Researcher went out to the school. The children were just finishing a writing piece in their ESL class. What fortuitous timing! She collected the writing pieces with the expectation that she was going to learn about how the children were becoming competent users of language. She sat down in a corner to count and calculate, scratch and scan. Seeing the Wise Teacher coming down the hall, she excitedly exclaimed, "Look at what I've found. In just 45 minutes, Cham has written 22 T-units[1] of practically standard English, Sonkla has written 23, Vuong penned 18, with only a few missing periods, and Khamla has written 32. That's similar to the length of compositions written in an identical time frame by native English-speaking children (District document, 1983). Just a few short months ago, they wrote much shorter compositions: Cham only wrote 10, Sonkla wrote 14, Vuong, 12, and Khamla, 9. These are very impressive data; now I know a great deal about how quickly these children are acquiring a second language."

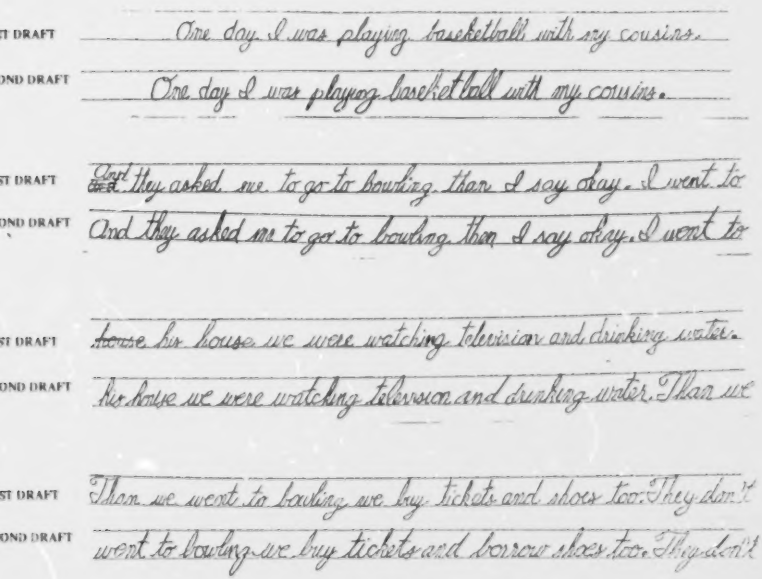
"Well," said the Wise Teacher. "You may know about what the children wrote today at 10:15. But these four children know that when they return to their ESL class, they will be expected to revise so that their pieces make more sense. If you want to understand the composing process of these young second language learners, you'll have to return several more times and see the process of revision."

That made sense to The Researcher. So the next week, at precisely

10:15, she returned to the ESL class, and then repeated those visits for several weeks. Taking the revised compositions back to The College, she marveled at how well the children were learning to communicate a message and was facinated by the varying strategies the children were developing when they revised. The compositions were not only becoming longer; they were also becoming more readable.

The Researcher looked at a revision of Vuong's composition entitled A Day I'll Never Forget.

*Figure 1.*


FIRST DRAFT
One day I was playing basketball with my cousins.
SECOND DRAFT
One day I was playing basketball with my cousins.
FIRST DRAFT
Then they asked me to go to bowling. Than I say okay. I went to
SECOND DRAFT
And they asked me to go to bowling. Than I say okay. I went to
FIRST DRAFT
house his house we were watching television and drinking water.
SECOND DRAFT
his house we were watching television and drinking water. Than we
FIRST DRAFT
Than we went to bowling we buy tickets and shoes too. They don't
SECOND DRAFT
went to bowling we buy tickets and borrow shoes too. They don't

The cramped carefulness of his penmanship and writing were obvious, each sentence of the first three quarters of the second draft being nearly an exact replica of the first. She remembered him bending over his work, carefully copying one word at a time from the first to the second draft paper and thought how his whole demeanor, vulnerable and afraid, was reflected in the very lines on the page. She noted that his major revision strategy was to add more information onto the first draft, and recalled that first language children experience a similar stage in their revision development (Graves, 1983).

She pulled Khamla's piece from the stack of papers.


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*Figure 2.*

FIRST DRAFT

It was Monday morning. My fiamly got up at 6:00 o'clock. I ask my mother why are we getting up so early? My mother didn't answer me. My father best friend came over to see me and my sister and my brother. They bought some candy for me, sister, and bor.ther. My father best friend ask wair is your father, Vialy? My brother answer my father is fishing with my bigest sister. My father came in the back way with my bigest sister. I ask my father did you catch any fish. My father answer no son I didn't catch any fish. My sister ran out to the frunt door. My sister ask the sogers wair are you going the soggers answer we are going to a meeting then my sister ran back to my father. All the sugger has gone to the meeting and it was time to go down to the boat. My bigest sister got to sit up in the frunt. I and my brother and got to sit in the middle. The boat was off. The boat was getting into the ruff waters. The water was getting in the boat, and my sister began to cry. The boat was getting wairver and wairver. The sooger saw the boat and begian to shoot at us. My father best friend jump out of the boat. I look out of the boat and I see blood all over the boat. We all got to Tirland and we all cry.

SECOND DRAFT

It was Monday morning my fiamly got up at 6:00 o'clock in the morning. I ask my mother shy are we getting up so enoury? My mother didn't ansirwa me. My father best friend came over to see us. My father came home from fishing with my sister. They didn't catch any fish because they didn't take any fishing rod with them. They just took the boat out and look around. They didn't see any gard around because they were having a meeting. Some gard pass by my home. My mother hoad me every tite because she was afirared. It was 7:00 o'clock. We all went down to the boat. My biggest sister got sit in frunt. Me and my brother and my other sister got sit in the back. My sister said we are going to Tireland because our father and our father best friend will be kill so I and my sister was beganing to cry. When my father best friend bady got on the boat she cry. Everyone was on the boat and was ready to go. My father count how many person were on the boat 20 times. He didn't want to forgot any person. 13 people was on the boat. My sister start the boat up. The boat nenjan was working just find. We start of to Tireland. Whan we were all hafe way their my sister began to cry. We got to the ruff part. The water was to storn for the boat that the water was geting in the boat. The water was geting in the boat so fast that my father best friend said the boat is getting

Also called A Day I'll Never Forget, it was an account of his family's flight from Laos to Thailand. Khamla's second draft composition represented a different revision strategy from Vuong's. Although the events were generally the same in both drafts, the second draft ignored some of the earlier information about the reason for the trip to Thailand, and his father's and sister's responsibilities on the boat before the trip began. The second draft included information about the reason why the day was unforgettable: a good friend of the family was shot by soldiers and jumped into the water. The second draft, therefore, seemed more cohesive, more focused. Perhaps, The Researcher surmised, Khamla had evaluated his message in the time frame given him, and decided to leave out events which slowed the action, and did not advance the message he really wanted to give. Perhaps, also, he sensed

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more need to explain why things happened, rather than just listing them. So in his first draft, he mentioned that his sister cried; in his second draft, he wrote that the reason his sister cried was because the water was coming into the boat.

The Researcher was very pleased with what she had found. She surely knew much more about the children after looking at their revisions. Their writing styles and revision strategies were often a reflection of their own personalities, and it was possible to observe that the children were beginning to develop a sense of Western Culture's emphasis on directness, and cause and effect after only a couple of years in a school in the United States.

The next time she went to the school, she saw The Wise Teacher. "I'm so glad you encouraged me to come to the school more than once," she said gratefully. "I have learned more about how the children are progressing in their acquisition of English by looking at what they revise, instead of just picking up one composition."

But The Wise Teacher looked thoughtful. "You may know more now than you did several weeks ago, and for these and for future children's sake I am thankful that you have taken the time to investigate their growth through revisions. But you are only surmising as to why they are changing their writing over successive drafts. You have never sat and watched them read or write. You have never talked with them about their writing. You have never been the audience for their written pieces, and responded to their messages. If you are to truly understand children's language experiences in school, and get a whole picture, then you must come and sit with the children, write with them, talk to them, and write back to them."

That made sense to The Researcher. So, at 1 o'clock the next day she went back to the school and met the children, who were just beginning to write on an assigned topic about their image of the future. The children welcomed her to the group; they were all good friends, and they sensed that she would be their friend, also. What's more, they trusted one another. Vuong and Khamla were best friends, and they liked nothing more than getting off in a corner and talking in Khamla's native language, Laotian, which Vuong had learned as a second language when his family fled to Laos from Cambodia. Vuong and Cham's friendship extended even to watching television together at each other's homes. When they spoke, and when they wrote, therefore, they knew their friends would be interested, and would value the stories which only they could tell. They believed that The Researcher also valued their stories and so they told her about the process they had been using to help each other become better writers.

"Each week we write something, and we bring it to our ESL class," they said. "Then we read it to each other two times, and the others tell

the writer what they like, and ask questions about what they don't understand. We take notes about what they tell to us, and go home and change it so it makes more sense."

"Does it help you to have responses from the others in the group?" The Researcher wanted to know.

"Yeah. A lot. At home, we just read it and add some more. Take out some and add some stuff."

The Researcher was intrigued. Here were children, none of whom were fluent writers yet, who took seriously their responsibility to improve both their own and the writing of their friends. So serious were they that they asked The Researcher to join them in their response groups.

Over the next four meeting times, The Researcher was excited about the changes that were being made on successive drafts by Cham (Appendix A). Although the second draft was identical to the first except that two sentences were added at the end, there were significant revisions on the third draft. The Researcher noted, for example, that Cham had removed all reference to dinosaurs and skeletons in her story, and remembered a question that she herself had posed to Cham during the response session. "I'm not sure I understand whether you're going back in time . . . to a time before . . ." she had said. "You said that there were dinosaurs and skeletons . . . but we find dinosaur skeletons even today. So were you trying to go back in time, Cham?" There had been no response from Cham at that time, but now, here on the third draft, were two revisions that seemed to have been motivated by the questions. Instead of "I want to go back to 1984," she had said, "As soon as it stopped, I was amazed to see that I was back in 1984." And she had completely dropped the sentence about dinosaurs and skeletons.

Another major change in the third draft had to do with the "green pills." The Researcher remembered that she had asked Cham how the green pills she had written about could have been eaten, thinking of the lack of gravity in her space story; Khamla had picked up this idea, also, and had said, "You don't pick up. You don't swallow it."

"Did they come right out and fall into your mouth?" The Researcher had asked, for she was truly interested in what kind of story Cham wanted to tell. But Cham needed to think about these questions before she decided how they should influence her story. And it was on the third draft that The Researcher could see a probable influence from this discussion, as Cham added the sentence, "Suddenly, a bunch of green pills drop from the ceiling. I knelt down on my knees and grab some and put it in my mouth."

The Researcher was beginning to realize the depth of the social nature of these students' developing literacy, and was more than a little

impressed at the power that questions and comments from trusted friends had upon the revision of the children's pieces.

It was encouraging, also, to realize that if the children were writing about a highly motivating topic, they would continue to revise until they felt it was a finished product. Such had been Cham's experience. Having received only a few comments on the third draft of her story, she was asked if there was anything she'd like to have help on. Cham didn't think so, but was also sure she did not like the story the way it was. Through questioning, she decided she would like to have a friend accompany her on her fictional trip into the future. The Researcher remembered, too, that she had encouraged Cham to use dialogue between her two fictional characters, since Cham had been practicing using quotation marks.

Had it only been those comments which produced Cham's fourth revision of her story? The Researcher looked carefully at the two drafts. Through the inclusion of an additional person in her story, Cham had given a sense of immediacy to her narrative. It was now a story whose events were frequently explicated through dialogue between the two characters. But how had the fourth draft appeared to the children? "There's more people talking," Cham had said. And Khamla had answered that this fourth draft seemed more real, and Vuong figured it was "real done." Could Cham have made her story better and better each time without the help of her friends, The Researcher asked the children? Khamla was thoughtful. "No," he finally said. "Everybody needs help."

The Researcher watched the children continuing to help one another. One piece that Vuong was excited about was based on his Outdoor School experience at a camp on the coast. After he read his first draft two times, the group took notes, and then began giving feedback to him. Much of the input from the group was in the form of questions about things on which they wanted to have more information (Figure 3). Khamla asked, for example, "How was it on the boat when you crossed the river?" Vuong, responding orally to his friend on the assumption that he truly wanted to know, answered, "It was scared. You know, foggy, deep water. The water is green." Then, so he would remember the content of his friend's interest, Vuong wrote "information cross the river" on his own note pad. Similarly, Cham asked Vuong "Was it a big boat or a little boat? If it was a little boat, did it take some people and then come back and get some other people?" Vuong answered, "Oh, ten people at a time," and made a note on his pad, "ten people at a time." (Additional examples can be seen in Figure 3.)

*Figure 3.*

| Peer Response | Writer's response | Notes |
|---|---|---|
| 1. How was it on the boat when you crossed the river? | It was scared. You know, foggy, deep water. The water is green. | Information cross the river. |
| 2. Was it a little boat or a big boat? If it was a little boat, did it take some people and then come back and get some other people? | Oh. 10 people at a time. | 10 people at a time |
| 3. Where do you put the clothes? "What clothes?" The clothes that you wear. | Oh, under our bed. No in the bag. In your bag, you know, you can put below your foot, feet. Put below your feet when you are sleeping, you know, put on your feet. | (Nothing) |
| 4. He didn't tell us what you do in campfire. | (Nothing) | (I tell him to put that down.) More on campfire. |
| 5. The first part seemed to be the first impression that you had of the camp. But I didn't know it was camp. So what you need to say is, "When I arrived at Camp Westwind . . . and then go on and say what you did. | (Nothing) | When we arrive |
| 6. (Talking about whether crossing the river was scary.) It would have made me a little more involved in your story, I think, if you had said how you felt. | (Nothing) | How I felt |
| 7. Who was your counselor? | Shark. That's not real name. It's kind of play name, you know? His real name is David. | His name David |
| 8. What was the woodpecker doing? | The woodpecker was eating something, maybe, you know, it tries to make a house or something. | woodpecker |
| 9. I like the word sandwich | (Nothing) | (Nothing) |
| 10. (Don't know reference) | (Nothing) | All of us |

The interaction continued for 20 minutes, with the readers exhibiting interest in this story, a story which only Vuong could tell.

The following week, The Researcher returned to the ESL classroom once more. Would the peer response session make any difference to the revision of Vuong's piece? Until now, Vuong's revision strategy had been to copy, one word at a time, on to a clean sheet of paper, carefully avoiding any crossing out or sloppy penmanship. Why should he change this strategy now? The Researcher listened intently as Vuong read his second draft.

*Figure 4.*

| FIRST DRAFT | SECOND DRAFT |
| --- | --- |
| First we go to the river we have to cross the river. On boat and we got to the camp and we pick up our stuff after that and we have to carry our stuff up to the cabin. Then we take our clothes out of the bags and get ready for dinner. After that it was camfire. | When we arrive to outdoor school and all of us cross the river. The water was deep it was green it has plants in it. When we arrive to other side we have to wait for peoples to cross the river. And then we walk to cafeteria and get our bags and we go to the cabin and take our clothes out of the bag and put it on my feet. And we went down to eat lunchs after lunchs we have to sing a song so we can dismiss. |

She remembered the reader's comments and saw where significant revisions had been made, possibly as a direct result of Vuong's realization that his friends really wanted to know something which only he could tell. His reading was animated and confident for the first time all year. His miscues were meaning-based. Khamla was very pleased with his friend. "It's better than the last time. He changes lots of new sentences." Was Vuong also aware of what he had done? "I add some more in," said Vuong. "You know about water and stuff. . . I say how I feel. More campfire, something like that."

The Researcher knew she was now understanding much more about the children's development of language and literacy. "How did you feel," she asked Vuong, "about the new paper?"

"New one? I feel better. A lot better."

"Did it help you to have the suggestions?"

"Yeah."

The Researcher returned to The College in a reflective mood. She was glad she had listened to the children. She had learned a great deal from hearing them read, watching them write, and participating in their response group sessions. She knew she could speak more informatively about the children's development of language since she had observed the process, and not simply analyzed the products of

language events. She knew there was important information to be gleaned from looking at pre- and post-data across a school year's time, but she also knew it was even more important to see the compositions which occurred in-between. No one would accuse her of being one of the blind men of Hindustan who thought they understood elephant-ness by catching hold of a tail, or a trunk! But she still had a nagging doubt that she had an incomplete picture of the children's development. The Wise Teacher confirmed her suspicions.

"You have only seen the children in the ESL classroom setting," she told The Researcher gently. "You know nothing about the environment in which they spend 5-1/2 hours a day, and you know nothing about their experiences at home. If you are to understand how some of the children revise easily, quickly, and confidently, and why others do not, why some of the children speak easily, and why others experience great difficulty, you will have to visit in the mainstream classrooms of these children, and in their homes. Many of their skills and attitudes are being learned there."

This made sense to The Researcher. So she made plans to spend days and days in each of the four children's classrooms, sitting beside them as they worked on math problems, filled in English workbooks, watched movies and discussed, and, in some cases, wrote. It did not take long for her to realize that the behavior expected in the ESL classroom was different from that expected in two of the mainstream classes. Where the boys were outgoing, friendly, even garrulous in the ESL class, they rarely spoke in their mainstream classroom in academic situations. Instruction in both of their classrooms was conducted with large groups; answering questions out of workbooks, talking about the upcoming Outdoor School experience, or correcting workbook pages were all done by the teacher standing at the head of the class. Where there had been an exchange of ideas on a conversational basis in the ESL classroom, the boys were faced with the necessity of bidding for attention to answer formally in the mainstream classroom. In general the boys found it difficult to follow the discussion or the directions and thus they rarely knew an answer and rarely raised their hands. If they did have an answer, and could contribute to the discussion, they waited to raise their hands until everyone else had raised theirs, and the teacher was about to call on someone else.

The most obvious difference, one which pained The Researcher greatly, was in writing. Where the boys enjoyed writing and revising in their ESL class, they, along with their classmates, never wrote more than one sentence at a time in all 8 hours of observation in the mainstream classroom. Where there was an assumption in the ESL class that each writer had a unique story to tell, in the mainstream class these children filled in blanks, copied dictionary definitions, high-

lighted spelling words in maze-type puzzles, and filled in cities and towns on maps. The Researcher felt as though a match had been struck in a dark room when she realized that the only time the boys ever wrote or spoke of their own experience, the only time they ever used the written word to help themselves know what they could potentially know, the only time they ever had anyone listen and read something which was born of their own special lives was in the ESL classroom. With no support from the mainstream classroom for the effective revision strategies being used in the ESL class, the boys, nevertheless, had grown in their understanding of the composing process. They were just doing it slowly.

What was true for the boys, however, was not true for the girls. In Sonkla's mainstream classroom, writing took place every day for at least an hour, frequently spilling over to other time periods as well. She wrote fables, poetry, autobiographies, expositions on a number of subjects, personal notes, and even journal entries. When she came to ESL class, she sometimes complained that she was too tired of writing to write any more! Cham's class also did some writing, though not nearly so much. However, in Cham's second year in the United States, she had a teacher who valued writing, and during that year, Cham wrote nearly every day. Both girls, then, received similar messages about themselves and their literacy from the two different classrooms: (a) you have an important message which only you can convey; (b) your audience is interested in your message, and you should pay attention to how effectively you are communicating; (c) writing is a messy, sometimes arduous, always facinating process which can help you understand yourself and the world a little better. With this support, both girls grew rapidly in both reading and writing instruction. Sonkla's teacher was so impressed with her development, she recommended that Sonkla skip the fifth grade, a process which did take place and was successful for her.

At the same time The Researcher was sitting in the mainstream classrooms of the children, she was also visiting in their homes. Searching for each of their apartments in row upon row of two-story apartment complexes, she wondered what she might find which would help her understand the children's language and literacy development. Would she find homes barren of reading material, especially since none of the families were fluent in English? Would she find an apathy concerning school, especially since none of the parents had been educated in Western educational systems? Would she find illiteracy, especially in the case of the boys, who seemed to be developing more slowly than the girls?

Her first visit was to the apartment of Vuong. Greeted warmly by Vuong's father, and briefly by his terminally ill mother, The Re-

searcher sat comfortably on the couch and looked around. Papers and reading materials were abundant. Bus schedules and tide charts for the family's frequent fishing trips were scattered everywhere. A pile of newspapers sat to one side of the couch. Brochures on Honda cars and newsletters from the father's company sat on the table in front of the couch. A Khymer-English, and a French-English dictionary were on the table beside the chair, and Vuong's father soon explained that because he had been with the diplomatic corps, he spoke French, Laotian, and English besides Thai and his native Cambodian. Newsletters and brochures from the Buddhist Society, in Cambodian, and from the Khymer Liberation Front, in both English and Cambodian, were everywhere, as were maps and calendars with pictures of Ankor Wat.

Vuong had his own room, with a small desk. His pencils were carefully lined up, leads sharpened to a point. His father's eyes rested lovingly on Vuong, as he said, "I tell him, 'You should work hard,' but I don't always know how to help him."

The Researcher left the apartment, shaking her head. If Vuong were getting the loving support he apparently was, and if all that reading material were available, then why, after 3-1/2 years in school, did the school officials not expect him to be able to achieve a passing score on the SRA test, and why, until the end of this year, had he not revised his writing? Why, in fact, were his writing pieces still similar to those of native speaking English children in their first stages of literacy, when young authors feel little pressure to write for a specific audience, or revise their pieces for anything but correct placement on the page? (Graves, 1983). Were his mainstream classrooms, which emphasized discrete skills, full-group instruction, copying and filling in blanks, such a powerful influence that he could not gain enough momentum from the ESL setting to find his own voice, and his own being in writing?

Despairingly full of questions, The Researcher went across the parking lot to the apartment of Cham, and then around the corner to the apartment of Sonkla. The heads of both families were the mothers; the husbands had been killed before the families escaped. Neither woman spoke English, and Cham and Sonkla were pressed into translating duty, a role neither felt comfortable with; they would whisper in Cambodian to their respective mothers. In neither house did The Researcher find newspapers, magazines, newsletters, or brochures. Cambodian calendars hung on the wall in the kitchen, but, except for a couple of letters from relatives, she saw no written material in their native language. Both homes had a telephone book, and since both Sonkla and Cham had brothers and sisters, both homes had books from school in a small bookcase. Sonkla, in fact, had a brother in a

Community College and he had brought home many books. After sharing tea and cake with the families, and being entertained with dances and music, The Researcher stumbled into the cold night, a jumble of questions in her brain. What are the crucial influences on children's acquisition of the English oral and writing system? What drives children like Sonkla and Cham, who have little obvious literacy support in their home, to make giant steps forward in reading, and to write and revise with energy and gusto? What makes children like Vuong, loved and encouraged by parents who have offered many possibilities for literacy events in their homes, face school with rigidity, and approach literacy with fear? How powerful are the influences of curriculum and instructional techniques in mainstream classes which either teach children to find their own voices, or discourage them from doing so?

After all the time and effort in this project, The Researcher realized she had ended with more questions than she had started. She also realized that her approaches to finding the answers had irrevocably changed. No longer could she be content with picking up data from learners who had produced a certain product on a certain day. No longer could she look at only one small aspect of learners' language and draw conclusions which would influence teaching and learning. And no longer would she confine her questions to narrow contexts like one classroom, or even one school. No, to serve children as well as to serve genuine scholarly inquiry, she would have to take her investigative blinders off and see whole children, as the sighted man saw the whole elephant.

The Researcher did not want to forget what the children had taught her and she wanted to be able to share it with otthers. So as she reached her office at The College she sat down to make note of what and how she had learned. She wrote:

1. When making decisions about children's linguistic abilities, make sure you have gathered data from a number of different sources.

2. Look at both the process and the product of children's language experience.

3. Recognize that children may be sick, or tired, or discouraged on days when linguistic abilities are being evaluated; to make momentous decisions about children's lives on the basis of one measure, with no acknowledgement of these influential factors, is both unprincipled and irresponsible.

4. Tread cautiously when drawing conclusions from any evaluative measure; children's futures are at stake.

5. Be informed about human growth and development because a person's orientation will determine the kinds of observations that are made and will govern the conclusions that are drawn.

Staring absently at the words she had written, The Researcher wondered how the children's story might end. All good stories end, *they lived happily ever after*.

But The Researcher knew that these children's lives would not automatically continue happily. If they are to live joyfully, and successfully, and productively, then bilingual educators and ESL educators – The Researcher, you, me – must constantly be advocates for them in their lives at school, as Cazden (1986) suggests. When school systems identify and label children on the basis of limited data, we must speak up and suggest additional data which would give a fuller picture. When a teacher suggests that a certain child is not reading the basal readers with enough comprehension to take the achievement tests, we must provide alternative means, such as the Reading Miscue Inventory (Rigg, 1986) to demonstrate the active strategies that that child might be using while struggling with the printed text. When committees gather to make decisions about future instructional needs of children, we must provide information like that contained in this volume, so that they can interpret the evaluations and test data with informed eyes.

A *happily ever after* is possible for the Vuongs and the Sonklas in our schools. They're depending on us to make it happen.

## Appendix

FIRST DRAFT

One day I was studing in the library. Then I kicked something under the table. I crawled under the table and saw a time machine. It was small and then I saw a red button said "Push." I pushed the button and the time machine grew bigger. It was almost as big as the table. There were two bars on each side of the time machine. I took hold of the bars and climb in. There were buttons everywhere and there was a chair. I sat in the chair and start pushing buttons. There was a sign said "Flying Succer." The Flying Succer zoomed up into the sky. I was getting hungry and I pushed another button. Green pills came and I swallow it. After awhile my chair was spining and the machine was running by itself. Finally the flying succer land. I got up and went to the door to push the button. I stepp out of the flying succer. Everything was odder than the flying succer. There were people skelaton and dinosaur's skelaton. Everything was dead. The house was torn down and no one was there. It was all messy and ugly.

SECOND DRAFT

One day I was studing in the library. Then I kicked something under the table. I crawled under the table and saw a time machine. It was small and then I saw a red button said "Push." I pushed the button and the time machine grew bigger. It was almost as big as the table. There were two bars on each side of the time machine. I took hold of the bars and climb in. There were buttons everywhere and there was a chair. I sat in the chair and start pushing buttons. There was a sign said "Flying Succer." The flying succer zoomed up into the sky. I was getting hungry and I pushed another botton. Green pills came out and I swallow it. After awhile my chair was spining and the machine was running by itself. Finally the flying succer land. I got up and went to the door to push the botton. I stepp out of the flying succer. Everything was odder than the the flying succer. There were people skelaton and dinosaur's skelaton. Everything was dead. The house was torn down and no one was there. It was all messy and ugly. I want to go back to 1984 because I want to be with people and my friends. I want to live in a nice house, not a torn down house.

THIRD DRAFT

One day I was studing in the library. Then I kicked something hard under the table. I crawled under the table and saw a time machine. It was small and rough and I saw a shinny red button. I prested the button and the time machine grew bigger. It was almost as big as the table. There were two bars on each side of the time machine. I took hold of the bars and climbed in. There were lots of strange buttons and in the corner was a chair. I sat in the chair and started presting buttons. The Time Machine zoomed up into the sky. I was getting hungry and I decided to prest another button. Suddenly, a bunch of green pills drop from the cieling. I nelt down on my knees and grab some and put it in my mouth. After awhile my chair was spining and the machines ran by itself. Finally the time machine landed and the chair stopped. I got up and went to the door. I was so dizzy I tripped. I stepped out of the time maching and everything was odder and different when the chair stopped. It was all messy and spooky. The houses were all torn down except one. As soon as I stepped on the stair the house fell down and I was frightened. I ran back to the time machine, closed the door and sat in the chair. I prested the same button and the chair spun again. As soon as it stopped I was amazed to see that I was back in 1984.

FOURTH DRAFT

One day me and one of my best friend Natalie were in the library studying. Then I kicked something under the table. "Hey, Nat, there's something strange under the table. Let's see what it is," I exclaimed. So we crawled under the table. "What a cute little thing," said Nat as she prest a shinny red button. The machine got bigger. "Back up, Nat," I yelled. "There's lots of machines and buttons inside there," said Nat. "Hey, I know what. We can call this thing a time machine," I suggested. Nat prest another button on a door and it opened. "Nat, there's a big chair over by the corner. Let's go and sit down." "Let us take turns pressing the buttons," said Nat as she prest one button. The light was on. When I prest the button, the door closed. We both decided to prest just two more buttons, and then we leave. Suddenly, the roof opened and millions of green pills dropped from the sky. We grabbed some of it and put it in our mouths. Then I accidently hit the biggest button. The chair was spinning faster each time. Natalie and I held on to each other and screamed. When it stopped, we stepped on the pills and went to the door. "Hey Cham, look at this. It says Happy 2084 and it's printed out of green pills. Come on, let's get out of here," I said. "Oh, oh. Now what kind of place are we in," said Natalie as we stepped out of the time machine. "Come on. Let's see who's in that creepy house. And as soon as we stopped on the stairs, the house started to crack. We ran back to the time machine and pushed the door closed. Then we raced back to our chairs and Natalie hit the big button and the chair started spinning again. When it stopped we both disappeared out of the time machine and were back under the table in the library. We looked around to make sure everything was back to normal. Then one of our friends walked and asked, "What are you doing down there under the table?" Natalie looked at me and laughed. "We're looking for candy."

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## Footnotes

[1]A T-unit is defined by Hunt (1965) as a unit which would be "grammatically capable of being terminated with a capital letter and a period." Therefore, the string "I like the movie we saw about Moby Dick, the white whale," is one T-unit, whereas the string, "He ran to the store and she saw him" is two T-units.

# "Use Everything You Have to Teach English": Providing Useful Input to Young Language Learners

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# "Use Everything You Have to Teach English": Providing Useful Input to Young Language Learners

> You must use every resource you can to teach them English . . . You have to use every part of yourself, every part of the room . . . You must try to use everything you have to teach English.
>
> – Molly

This is how an English as a second language (ESL) teacher intern answered the question "What did you find different between teaching in the regular classroom and teaching ESL?" in an interview held several weeks after the conclusion of her six week teaching experience in an intensive ESL summer school. What did this teacher (who shall be called Molly) mean by the phrase "use everything you have to teach English"? The purpose of this paper is to provide a tentative answer to this question by describing the ways this teacher adjusted her classroom *communicative input* to make it as useful as possible to all of her children, English-speaking, bilingual, and ESL children alike. It is the author's hope that the "thick description" (Geertz, 1971) of one successful teacher's input in an elementary ESL classroom summarized here will provide some further clarification to our present conceptualization of second language instructional input, and that it will provide ESL teachers with some possible teaching strategies to apply in their own classrooms.

## An Evolving Definition of Input

It was only in the late 1960's and early 1970's that researchers began to systematically examine both the language (or "input") provided to young acquirers of a first language ($L_1$) as well as the language provided to people of all ages speaking and/or learning a second language ($L_2$). $L_1$ input is commonly referred to as "baby talk" or "motherese" and more recently as "caretaker talk". $L_2$ input is commonly referred to as "foreigner talk".

As these labels suggest, the majority of the early studies describing $L_1$ and $L_2$ input focused largely on the linguistic properties of data that

language learners are exposed to as they grapple with the language learning task. In one of many reviews of $L_1$ input research[1], Wells and Robinson (1982) list the following as the "most well-documented" features of caretaker talk: (a) manner of delivery (slower, more clearly pronounced, and more fluent); (b) formal simplicity (shorter and syntactically similar utterances); (c) prosody (higher pitch and larger range of pitch to create an impression of the exaggerated use of intonation); (d) semantic simplicity and redundancy (topics limited to the "here and now," only a small set of semantic relations and lexicon, much repetition of words, phrases, and utterances); and (e) function (high proportion of imperatives and interrogatives and a low proportion of declaratives). Proceeding from this fifth area of function and from their own research (e.g. Robinson & Arnold, 1977; Wells, 1981), Wells and Robinson add a sixth important characteristic to their list of caretaker speech characteristics, namely, that "it is contingently related to the child's own behavior – either to his preceding utterance or utterances, to his current activity, or to his (presumed) focus of attention" (1982, p. 62). They conclude that $L_1$ input researchers must broaden their focus from considering only the linguistic aspects (the "form and content") of the speech that is addressed to children to also considering its nonlinguistic aspects ("the context of the ongoing conversation" and "the situation in which it occurs").

In like manner, researchers examining $L_2$ input in both natural conversation settings (e.g. Ferguson, 1975, with adult speakers; Katz, 1977, with children) and in the classroom (e.g. Gaies, 1979, with adult students; Wong-Fillmore, 1976, with children) also began by concentrating on the linguistic properties of the data providedto $L_2$ learners. Hatch (1983) summarizes and contrasts the literature concerning motherese and foreigner talk, and finds not only similar (predominantly linguistic) characteristics of input being investigated, but also very similar results emanating from these investigations. Hatch concludes from her review of the input literature that "the research . . . shows that there are marked similarities in language addressed to learners whether they are first or second language learners." (1983, p. 159). Four of the five features that Hatch summarizes are linguistic ones: (a) suprasegmantals (such as exaggerated intonation and slow rate); (b) phonology (such as clear enunciation, and simplification); (c) semantics (such as a concrete lexicon, and definitions); and (d) syntax (such as more imperatives, greater use of 1-word utterances, fewer questions, and more content words). Hatch's fifth feature is a nonlinguistic one drawn from her own work (Hatch, Shapira & Gough, 1978) as well as from others' studies (e.g. H. Clark & E. Clark, 1977; De Paulo & Bonvillian, 1975). She calls this feature "communication devices," amongst which are repetition of words and phrases, correction

of truth value and phonology over correction of syntax, rephrasing, sentence fill-ins,[2] occasional questions[3] and frames.[4] These communication devices, like Robinson's and Wells' nonlinguistic input feature, are dependent upon the language learners' previous utterances.

Hatch (1983), Wells and Robinson (1982), and others (e.g. H. Clark & E. Clark, 1977; Newport, H. Gleitman & L. Gleitman, 1977) also pointed out that in providing tailored language to language learners in everyday settings, proficient speakers concentrate on achieving communicative goals with their conversational partners and not on achieving teaching goals. As Wells and Robinson explain it, the modifications that parents make in speaking to their young children stem from the parents' "intention to help the children to explore and understand the world of objects and events" around them rather than from any direct language teaching intention (1982, p. 22). This same conclusion forms the basis for one of the most famous and influential interpretations of the nature and role of input in the $L_2$ development process, Krashen's "Input Hypothesis" (1980, 1982), one of the five central hypotheses used by this theorist to construct his theory of second language acquisition. The input hypothesis states that "we acquire (not learn) language by understanding input that is a little beyond our current level of (acquired) competence." (Krashen & Terrell, 1983, p. 32).

Krashen and his colleague, Terrell, also distinguish between language *acquisition*, which they define as "developing ability in a language by using it in natural, communicative situations," and language *learning*, which they define as "having a conscious knowledge about grammar" (1983, p. 18). This distinction is encapsulated in one of the other central hypotheses of Krashen's $L_2$ development model, the "acquisition-learning distinction." This hypothesis also states that children develop a second language through the acquisition process and that adult $L_2$ learners have both the acquisition process and the learning process available to them for learning a second language.[5]

Krashen (1982) uses the acquisition-learning distinction and the input hypothesis to argue for an $L_2$ instructional model which takes into account both the unconscious acquisition process and the conscious learning process but which favors acquisition, which he sees as the more dominant and efficient of the two. Krashen places his pedagogical emphasis on providing the same kind of input to $L_2$ learners in the language classroom as that which is apparently supplied to them outside the classroom: input which is communicative in intent and which is largely able to be understood and used by the $L_2$ learner. He calls this kind of classroom input "comprehensible input" and concludes that if enough of it is provided in the classroom in ways that make it interesting and non-intimidating to students, then language development will

occur.

Krashen's theory is only one of several current conceptualizations of the $L_2$ acquisition process,[6] and it continues to undergo rigorous empirical and theoretical examination. Along with this examination has come an even greater recent focus among applied linguists on the exact nature of the input that is needed by $L_2$ learners in order to become proficient in the target language. Beginning with discourse data elicited from experimental settings, researchers such as Long (1981, 1983) and Scarcella and Higa (1982) first challenged the prevailing conceptualization of $L_2$ input as simpler and more ungrammatical than everyday conversation by extending their comparative analyses of native speakers' conversations with each other (NS-NS) and with non-native speakers (NS-NNS) to include *interaction variables* (functions and discourse strategies) in addition to linguistic ones. Long's studies showed that the input that native-speakers provided, to both fellow native-speakers and non-native speakers, varied with the nature of the task. Scarcella and Higa's studies of adult native-speakers providing input to adolescent (aged 15.5 - 16.5) non-native speaking partners and to child (aged 8.5 - 9.5) non-native speaking partners indicated that adult native-speakers alter their speech more for children than for adolescents. Scarcella and Higa suggest that one of the reasons that their native-speakers worked harder with their child partners is because the children did not participate as actively in the conversation as the adolescent speakers, who made significantly more efforts to obtain comprehensible input and to sustain the conversation themselves.

One of the virtues of the Long, and Scarcella and Higa studies that have been reviewed here is that they escape the constraints of "linguistic analysis – only" and through analysing the overall flow of discourse and the language of both input givers and receivers they are able to identify and measure some of the interactive characteristics of input that occur within that wider context. However, it should be noted that these same studies are also concerned with the analysis of dyadic (two persons only) discourse data (transcripts of speech with a mention of the task) collected under quasi-experimental conditions (data elicited from a few controlled laboratory tasks and settings). The number of interactive strategies and devices that these researchers are able to identify is thereby constrained by their studies' designs and the interactive settings from which their data were elicited. Even more recently, researchers have turned to a more holistic analysis of naturally occurring class and discourse (input and output) to ascertain whether the linguistic and interaction variables developed within the elicited speech research operate in the same way in the hurly-burly of the classroom. These investigations have included examinations of discourse in the adult ESL classroom (Chaudron, 1983), in the immersion

classroom (Swain, 1985), in the elementary bilingual education classroom (Wong-Fillmore, 1982, 1985) and in the mainstream elementary school (Schinke-Llano, 1983; Saville-Troike, 1985). These naturalistic investigations are beginning to uncover the wide variety of $L_2$ input and output strategies that are being used (with varying success) in specific real world classroom settings in response to specific sets of student and instructional needs. The data reported here are from one such study of natural classroom interaction data. In addition, the study reported here included the collection and analysis of nonverbal and other descriptive aspects of the interaction and the settings in which it occurred.

## The Larger Study

The description of one teacher's $L_2$ input presented here comes from the analysis of the data of a much larger ethnography of communication of a summer ESL program and practicum. As such, these results are firmly grounded in a long research tradition which has only recently been widely applied to the general study of life in classrooms (Green, 1983), and which is even less evident in specific studies of second language classrooms (Cazden, Carrasco, Guzman & Erickson, 1980). The results presented here are descriptive rather than predictive in nature, they are based on a research approach that is discovery-oriented rather than hypothesis-testing in nature, and they are based on naturalistic data rather than on experimentally controlled data. Therefore these results should be interpreted as a depiction of the way it is in one ESL classroom rather than as a formula for the way it should be in all ESL classrooms. As with all research reports, it is left to the reader to make the final judgment as to the applicability of the findings to the reader's own classroom or other professional situation.

### *The Setting*

The setting of the present study was a six week summer ESL school and practicum located near the center of a large urban metropolitan area. The teachers in the program were graduate student interns in an ESL teacher education program and came from a wide variety of backgrounds, teaching experiences, and work experiences with second language learners. The summer program also utilized the services of teenage and adult (mostly parent) volunteers, who assisted with all-school activities and were placed in individual classrooms around the school.

The school component of the summer program was organized to

achieve three central goals: (a) to provide several opportunities for ESL students to acquire oral English during the summer vacation; (b) to expose ESL students to the larger U.S. community and culture and to encourage ESL and native-English speaking students to learn about each other; and (c) to provide fun summer experiences for all students in order to enrich their academic experience. The enrollment of each classroom in the school was arranged to include students from a wide variety of cultural and linguistic backgrounds as well as a variety of current levels of communicative competence in English. Each classroom had approximately 20 to 30% native English-speaking students and 70 to 80% international students. The enrollment of international students in each classroom was also arranged to include a range of students, from balanced bilinguals to students who had just entered the U.S. and were encountering ESL for the first time. Class sizes ranged from 11-18 students.

The teachers' practicum experience within the summer program consisted of one week of daily seminars and classroom preparation periods followed by four weeks of actual instruction in self-contained ESL classrooms. The sixth week of the practicum consisted of "debriefing," synthesis seminars and classroom clean-up periods. As part of their practicum, teachers had individual teaching conferences with the two summer professors/supervisors at the end of each of the four teaching weeks. These sessions were recorded and used as part of the interview data for the study (see next section).

In contrast to the typical student-teaching practicum where students work with designated "cooperating teachers" in those teachers' classrooms, the graduate students in this summer ESL practicum were in charge of organizing their own self-contained classrooms and curricula. However, they were also given several explicit activities to conduct in order to achieve the overall goals of the school components of the program and to develop their teaching skills within the practicum component of the program. Teachers were required to conduct activities using a variety of subject-matter areas (e.g., art, science, cooking) and lesson formats (e.g. full group lecture, full group discussion, small group instruction); they were required to organize field-trips and learning centers; and they were required to write detailed weekly lesson plans and daily journals of their summer experiences. The lesson plans and journals that resulted from these last requirements were also integrated into the overall data base of the investigation (see next section).

*Data Collection and Analysis*

Data collection for the larger study involved several ethnographic

techniques. These included participant observation in the classrooms by three different researchers with three different roles within the school; questionnaires (e.g., ratings of students, sociometric surveys, categorization tasks, program and course evaluations); weekly formal interviews (the teaching conferences); daily informal interviews; examination of teachers' lesson plans and journals and other written work; and examination of students' work. In addition, audio- and video-tape data were collected throughout the summer. Care was taken to record activities representing the entire range of interactive events organized by the teachers for their classes (e.g., opening activities, cooking, story time, free choice). Observations and audio- and/or video-taping also took place during out-of-classroom events, such as field trips, an all-school picnic, play rehearsals and presentation, and playground activities. Careful records were kept of what each teacher planned and actually implemented on each day of the summer session in order to determine the typicality of events in the analysis. These records were also used to assist in the overall cataloguing of the interaction occurring in each target classroom. Observational records were also made during the taping periods in order to assist in the transcription and the microanalysis of the videotape data.

The general ethnographic data and the audio- and video-tape data were then subjected to analysis using a combination of micro-ethnographic (Erickson & Shultz, 1981, Erickson & Mohatt, 1982) and constitutive ethnographic (Mehan, 1979) techniques, the results of which were triangulated (Sevigny, 1981; Goetz & LeCompte, 1984) in post-interviews with the teachers. These techniques facilitate the analysis and the depiction of both the verbal and the nonverbal components of classroom interaction. They also permit the analysis and depiction of longitudinal, developmental interaction patterns. The description of one of the target teachers' communicative input that follows is one product of this analysis of the overall data.

*Molly and Her Class*

The teacher whose developing $L_2$ input strategies are presented here taught one of two (entering) kindergarten/first grades in the ESL summer school. Molly had a parent aide assigned to her classroom who was present in her classroom for over 85% of the summer session. Molly's 16 students (average attendance) ranged in ages from 4.11 to 6.3 and were from eight different countries and six different language backgrounds. The class included four native English-speaking children and 12 international children. Three of the 12 international children were being exposed to English for the first time, seven were early ESL students, and two were balanced bilinguals. There were nine girls and

seven boys.

Molly was highly rated by the administrators, supervisors, and other teachers at the school in which she had taught kindergarten during the previous year. One of her head administrators commented: "Molly can teach anything she puts her mind to." Another provided her with an unequivocal written recommendation for entry into the summer program, writing that "she is a particularly responsive person as well as an excellent teacher. I could not recommend her more highly." As an ESL intern, Molly received similar outstanding ratings from her fellow teachers and from both of her professors (including the author) at the conclusion of her summer practicum.

Molly achieved this high status in the program in spite of her position as the only one of the 12 summer teachers with virtually no direct experience with ESL children and as the only graduate student with no previous exposure to $L_2$ theory and methodology.[7] Molly is bilingual, however, and spent her childhood living in several countries in a bilingual household. She identified her main reasons for joining the ESL program as to "find out whether I enjoy teaching ESL," to "challenge myself with a new experience," and "to draw upon my strengths as a teacher of young children and adapt them to a new situation for me" (Bilingual/ESL Teacher Profile). The rest of this paper will describe the key adaptations that Molly made in switching from a homogeneous, all native English-speaking teaching situation, to a hetereogeneous, ESL and native English-speaking teaching situation, first in her general teaching approaches and then in her specific communicative input.

## Molly's General Instructional Adaptations

As Molly participated in the summer practicum and teaching experience, she made three major adaptations in her general instructional approach. First, Molly began to see classroom language as performing both a language teaching as well as a subject-matter teaching function. Seeing this, Molly then began to use more and more small group and individualized activities in place of full group activities. Finally, Molly adapted her view of her own role in the classroom from viewing herself as a language giver to viewing herself as a language facilitator and user with her students. Each of these adaptations contributed to Molly's simultaneous adjustment of her communicative input to her students. None of these adaptations was sudden or instantaneous, but they developed gradually throughout Molly's entire summer experience, as the descriptions below will demonstrate. Because these adaptations also overlapped with each other and with Molly's developing input strategies they are not presented here in any hierarchical or

chronological order.

*From Cognition to Communication plus Cognition*

Molly began the summer with lesson plans that were heavily content-based, emphasizing traditional kindergarten concepts (e.g. categorization, counting). Molly wrote about her problem with this orientation after the first day of school:

> Gear down. I planned much too much and didn't realize how much of it depended on a better understanding of English. (Personal journal, June 27)

As early as the second day of school, Molly was already actively altering her self-perception (her "thinking" as she constantly referred to it) to fit her new ESL teaching situation:

> I never knew I was so cognitively oriented – thinking language is *not automatic* or *natural* (emphasis hers). I really need to stop my mental flow to pull up ideas. This is so much more difficult than I ever would have thought. (Personal journal, June 28)

Thus, the first adaptation that Molly made in her summer instruction was in expanding her view of her interaction with her students from a cognitive, content-oriented perspective to that of a communicative, language-oriented perspective embedded in content activities.

By the end of the second week of school, Molly's re-orientation was complete and she had begun to approach both the curriculum planning and the actual instruction components of her teaching with a communicative orientation. Her stated rationales and objectives in her lesson plans reflected this change, as did her criteria for judging whether or not an activity was successful. For example, here is how Molly described a "successful" activity at the end of her second week of school (one of the themes for the week was "Parts of the Body"):

> I had [aide] do self-portraits with the kids at the art table – SUCCESS – Humor came into play. They were drawing silly pictures of each other and leaving off parts of their bodies. Each child was telling another child what to add and there was *natural* converstions [*sic*] about family members. I was comfortably able to encourage natural conversation and did a lot of modeling. It was not contrived and it was relaxing and fun. (Personal journal, July 7)

So by roughly the middle of her summer teaching experience, Molly had identified "natural," communicative language use (what Urzúa,

1985 calls "real" activities) as one criterion of a successful language learning activity, along with the criteria "relaxing" and "fun."

By the time the summer program was over, Molly had completely integrated cognition (i.e. content) and communication (i.e. language), seeing her previous expertise with the former as a helpful tool in developing the latter:

> I was able to draw on all of my experience as a regular classroom teacher . . . including in the management area and in the curriculum [inaudible] in cognition and the curriculum to teach these children ESL. (Triangulation interview, Oct. 25)

As Molly herself saw it, her preparation as a regular classroom teacher was a good foundation for her ESL teaching, but was not sufficient for successful ESL teaching in and of itself. Molly described herself as paying attention to both the congitive and linguistic aspects of her classroom language by the time her summer experience was over. In this manner, Molly's interaction with her ESL students throughout the summer shifted from closely resembling regular classroom discourse to the kind of cooperative and communicative caretaker $L_1$ discourse described earlier by Wells and Robinson.

*From Full Group to Small Group and Individualized Events*

The second adaptation that Molly made in adapting her instruction for her ESL students was to change from employing full group teaching events[8] to employing small group and individualized teaching events for the greatest portion of the school day. This is illustrated in Table 1, which presents the subsets of events and their approximate durations that occurred in Molly's classroom near the beginning and end of the summer session.

As Table 1 indicates, near the end of her first week of teaching ESL, Molly was using the full group, teacher-directed event for over half of the school day (105 of 190 minutes). This type of event dominated Molly's instruction throughout the first week. The individualized/cooperative event was Molly's second most used event during the first week of school. During this time this event consisted of each student working individually on the same teacher-selected task. It usually followed a full group event introducing the task that the students were to complete. The small group and individualized/independent events accounted for the rest of Molly's instructional time (approximately 35 minutes, or 20% of the day), and on this fourth day of summer school they occurred simultaneously.

As Molly continued to become accustomed to her new students and

Table 1
*Molly's Classroom Events Near the Beginning and End of Summer School*

(Events marked with an asterisk (*) within a column indicate events occuring simultaneously.)

| Grouping | Events and Approximate Duration | |
|---|---|---|
| | Week 1 / Day 4 | Week 4 / Day 4 |
| Full Group and Teacher and/or Aide | Greetings, Explanation of Days Agenda<br>Light/Dark Color<br>Birthday Introduction<br>Storytime<br>Outdoor Bubbles<br>Choral Song<br>Dismissal | Greetings, Explanation of Days Agenda<br>Program Rehearsal<br>Choral Song<br>Dismissal |
| | Approx. Dur.: 105 min. | Approx. Dur.: 50 min. |
| Small Group and Teacher and/or Aide | Paper Towel Dyeing* | Finger Painting*<br>Aide Tutorial* |
| | Approx. Dur.: 35 min. | Approx. Dur.: 45 min. |
| Individualized/ Cooperative (Teacher Task) | Signatures on Towels<br>Birthday Language Experience<br>Snack<br>Clean-up | Choosing Library Books<br>Clean-Up<br>Blocks Center (first phase)* |
| | Approx. Dur.: 50 min. | Approx. Dur.: 45 min. |
| Individualized/ Independent (Student Task) | Free Play* | Block Center (second phase)*<br>Free Play<br>Outdoor Play |
| | Approx. Dur.: 35 min. | Approx. Dur.: 90 min. |

*Note.* In Table 1, "Full Group" signifies events in which the entire class participatd together on a single task under the teacher's direction, e.g. "lessons"; "Small Group" signifies events in which two - six students participated together on a single task under the teacher's or aide's direction, e.g. "reading group"; "Individualized/Cooperative" signifies events in which students participated alone or in assigned or self-chosen groupings on tasks of the teacher's choosing, e.g. "seatwork"; and "Individualized/Independent" signifies events in which students participated alone or in self-chosen groupings on tasks of their own choosing, e.g. "free time."

to develop in her instructional role she also became increasingly dissatisfied with the groupings and events she had originally chosen. This dissatisfaction stemmed directly from Molly's frustration with the language use implicit in her main grouping (the full group):

> I found I was doing most of the talking and I was talking to one at a time in the whole group situation. (Informal interview, July 1)

Molly's planned choice of interactional events and groupings began to change during the second week of school until by the end of the summer the overlapping small group-individualized/independent events pattern dominated her instruction, accounting for approximately 100 minutes out of 170 minutes on the next-to-last day of school. This shift occurred both in Molly's planning and in her actual implementation of instruction; that is, the actual, timed events that were observed and recorded in her classroom were almost identical to the events she had planned for the day within her weekly lesson plans. The typical scenario during this major portion of the day late in the summer would be Molly working in a small group, her aide working with another small group, and the rest of the class choosing their own activities ("free choice").

When asked about this conscious shift in classroom organization as it was taking place, Molly explained:

> Small groups just work so much better (with these children). I can monitor what they are saying and how they are saying it and I can get around to everyone. It's so hard in the whole group to keep everyone with you – to keep them interested. (Informal interview, July 10)

For Molly, then, smaller, more individualized groupings and events provided better opportunities for language instruction than the full group setting, and she began to use these events more and more as her own perceived need to "keep children interested" and to provide them with individualized input increased.

*From Giving Language to Getting Language to Using Language*

Closely related to the other two adaptations Molly made in her summer instruction was the transformation that took place in her view of her primary teaching role in the ESL classroom. Molly went through three stages in this transformation, each stage encompassing and building upon the one that preceded it.

Before the students arrived, Molly saw herself as the language giver, treating ESL as a subject and teaching it like any other content area. As

Molly initially perceived it, she *had* the content (i.e. language) and the students who did not have it were to *receive* it from her. After the fourth day of summer school, Molly was already analyzing the effects of her language giver's role, however:

> I'm having lots of problems eliciting more than one word responses to me. I really need to focus on getting sentences out because so many of them (the children) speak closer to sentences during socializing. (Personal journal, June 27)

This journal excerpt marks Molly's rapid transition from being primarily a language giver to being primarily a language getter, attempting to take the large number of differences in her students' backgrounds into account in her instruction.

During the language getting stage in her development of her ESL teaching role, Molly's central goals were to create opportunities for all of her students to participate and communicate and to learn as much as she could about her students' language abilities and needs in order to accommodate all of them in her instruction. These goals are exemplified in the following comments:

> What a super day!!!!! My most successful language was COLOR CONCENTRATION – *everyone wanted* to play and enjoyed the game. I was a facilitator of language . . . (Personal journal, June 29)

> I'm getting closer to what *they* are thinking about to get language out. (Personal journal, July 6)

> I just have to relax and *listen* to my children . . . I'm going to let them tell me what we should be doing and not force all this language down their throats. (Informal interview, July 7)

Thus Molly moved from concentrating on her own language to concentrating on her students' language and other characteristics during this second major stage of her developing conception of the ESL teaching role.

Once Molly became satisfied that each day's set of events was accommodating all of her students' interests and abilities at least part of the time during each school day, she was then able to move on to the final stage in her development of her ESL teaching role, turning from merely getting students' language to *using* their language at the moment it occurred and in subsequent interaction in order to develop their $L_2$ competence. She herself indirectly summarized this final view of the ESL teacher as the students' language user in her oral evaluation of the summer learning centers requirement during a seminar held after

the summer school had ended:

> The Blocks center worked so well . . . it gave the kids a chance to choose what they were interested in making and what *they* like to do and to talk about. Then *I* can-do-talk about it with them, and work in my concepts and language plus the concepts and language they need. (Debriefing seminar, July 26)

As the summer session continued, Molly became convinced that the most effective language learning took place in her class when both the students and she actively participated together in two-way communicative interactions which were motivated and structured by her. These two-way language teaching interactions included both preplanned interactions using language and concepts which Molly built into her instructional events and also serendipitous, moment to moment, two-way language teaching interactions which Molly took advantage of, in working within her instructional events. As Molly explained it:

> I feel that sometimes my best language teaching comes when I'm just sitting around and talking with him (a beginning ESL child) about what he's doing and what he's thinking about. But it has to be when he wants to talk. I can't force it. (Conference interview, July 5)

This two-way, give-and-take interaction in both its planned and unplanned forms then predominated in Molly's classroom throughout the last few days of summer school.

### Molly's Input Adaptations

At the same time as Molly was adapting her curriculum focus, her events and groupings, and her view of her teaching role to fit her new teaching situation, she was adapting her ways of interacting with her students and her provision of communicative input to them. As with her other teaching adaptations, these adaptations occurred both in the planning stages of Molly's instruction and in her actual in-class interaction with students.

It is important to reiterate here that Molly was teaching a class made up of students of widely varying English language abilities, from students with virtually no previous exposure to English to U.S. students with English as their native and only language. Faced with such incredible diversity, Molly's primary response besides attempting to individualize her instruction as much as possible was to adapt her own interaction with her students so that it would be maximally useful to all

of them, native-English speaking, balanced bilingual, and ESL students alike. That is, in addition to sub-grouping her class for various kinds of language-learning activities, Molly strove to incorporate the needs of her full English-speakers as well as her ESL students into her ongoing talk with the entire class.

Figure 1 presents a summary view of the range of techniques that Molly developed throughout the summer in order to maximize the usefulness of her ongoing input to her students. These techniques emerged from the analysis of the general ethnographic data and the microanalysis of the videotape data. This set of techniques should not be taken as an exhaustive one, however, since it is very likely that Molly employed other input techniques that were not detected by the researchers.

As Figure 1 illustrates, Molly's input strategies can be divided into five loosely defined categories: (a) those relating to Molly's use of her own physical and verbal resources, (b) those relating to her use of sensory aids, (c) those relating to her use of the students, (d) those relating to her use of different types of events, and (e) those relating to her use of contextual contrast. All five of these kinds of techniques occurred in the "real world" of Molly's students, both inside the classroom and outside the classroom (e.g. on field trips, on the playground, in the cafeteria). The dotted lines delineating each category indicate that these techniques were all interdependent and overlapping. For example, Molly might have had a student act as a demonstrator (the "Students" category) using a photo (the "Sensory Aids" category) in order to present new language and concepts to the class. The double arrows between the "Events," the "Sensory Aids," and the "Contextual Contrast" categories indicate that the various techniques within them almost invariably were used in conjunction with one another. All of the techniques shown in Figure 1 are described in detail in the following sections.

### *Molly Herself*

The primary input techniques that resulted from Molly's efforts to adjust her instructional input for the ESL classroom developed within Molly's ongoing interactive behavior as the summer progressed. These adjustments occurred in Molly's *discourse* techniques (re: Long's "interaction" variables and Hatch's "communication devices"), in her *paraverbal* techniques, and in her *nonverbal* techniques.

#### *Discourse Techniques*

Molly made three clear adjustments in her discourse as she worked

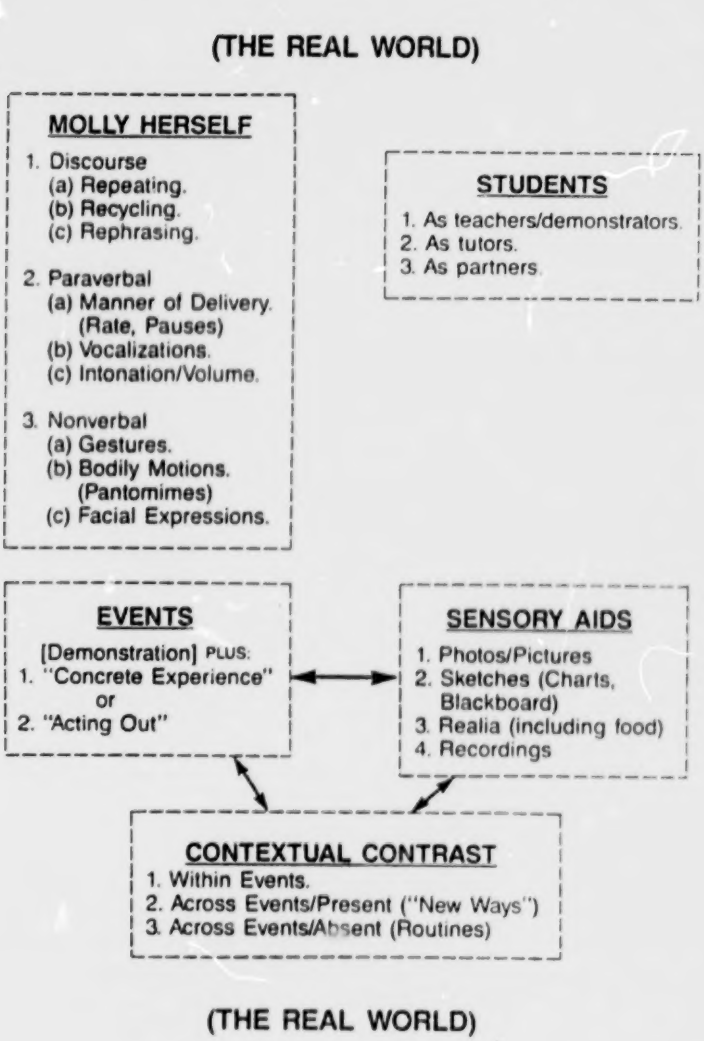


*Figure 1.* Molly's Input Techniques

with her culturally and linguistically diverse class. First, she repeated the same words and phrases over and over again in slightly different ways within the same event, in much the same ways as in the repetitions reported within the $L_1$ input literature. Here is an example of Molly's repeating strategy taken from a small group cooking event (Molly was directing six students in making pancake batter):

Molly: All right, look here. OK –

Alberto: Break an egg.

Molly: –now. Did you hear Alberto say "Break an egg"? How did you know that, Alberto? Alberto said, *"Break the egg"!* Look here, everybody needs to put *one egg* in their cup. All right Jaime, take an egg and then you pass it to Lin and say "Lin, take an egg."

Jaime: (to Lin) Take the egg.

Lin: (to Mary) Take an egg.

Molly: I heard Lin. I heard you say it. I didn't even need to tell you! (An egg falls off the table.) What happened?

Jaime: It fall.

Molly: *One egg* on the floor. This egg's no good.

(Videotape, July 2)

As this excerpt demonstrates, Molly's repetitions consisted of slightly different uses of the same words and phrases, and these repetitions were meaning-based rather than repetition for repetition's sake. In this way they were different from the repetition drills that are often found in $L_2$ classrooms.

Molly's repeating technique also occurred across all of her different content area events and groupings. For example, she repeated "fold" and "squeeze" phrases several times during a full group art demonstration, she used "up"and "down" phrases repeatedly throughout a one-on-one session with an ESL child playing with blocks during "free choice" (individualized/independent event), and she referred repeatedly to the names of ingredients and materials during small group cooking events such as the one excerpted above.

In addition to repeating words and phrases within an event, Molly also re-introduced language and concepts at later times and in new events. Through the use of an integrated curriculum centering on three to five curriculum themes during the summer, Molly constantly reviewed and recycled key linguistic forms and key K-1 concepts within her instructional input. To illustrate, during Week 1 of the

summer, Molly read a story about colors and discussed a color bulletin board and colors present in the room and on the children's clothing. This was followed up on the first day of Week 2 with an individualized/cooperative event in which individual students chose sets of "M and M's" and filled in graphs representing the number of "M and M's" they found of each color. This was then followed up each day of Week 2 by daily full group reviews of the graph activity with the entire class devouring one color of "M and M's". A subsequent small group activity during Week 4 involved children tye-dyeing t-shirts, requesting colors and blending colors after predicting what would happen.

Molly used her recycling technique consistently throughout the summer across all of her content area events and across all of her groupings. This technique allowed Molly to introduce completely new language (for LES students) and completely new content (for all students) in the context of previously learned language and content. The recycling technique was Molly's teaching response to Krashen's call for input "a little beyond" students' competence.

Finally, besides repeating the same key language and concepts within and across her events, Molly regularly rephrased her input to her children, recasting or re-mapping the same concepts onto new vocabulary and phrases. Some examples of this technique:

> You're right! We'll have balloons! Big colored balls of air! (Observation notes, June 28)

> You have to *fold* it. (She demonstrates.) You turn it over and then over again. Like this. (Videotape, June 30)

> *Yesterday*. Monday. The day before today. It was the fourth of July! (Observation notes, July 5)

Molly utilized this technique in her input across all of her content area events and groupings also, although she appeared to particularly favor it in the full group setting (perhaps because that was the most linguistically heterogeneous setting in her class). Molly used rephrasing so regularly that her English-speaking students also incorporated this technique into their interactions with ESL peers in order to improve the usefulness of their input:

> Often when I say something, one of my kids will ask what it is or one of my English models will give it another name. That's really helpful . . . You find yourself saying the same thing as many ways as you can think of. (Informal interview, July 11)

This is how Molly expressed a central discourse rule that she used throughout her summer ESL teaching experience, and one which

combines together all three of the discourse strategies described here. Molly used this rule to simultaneously help her ESL students comprehend what she was saying, to maintain her English-speaking students' interest and attention, and to preserve the content and flow of her teaching. In this way her discourse adaptations helped her to meet her own twin criteria for creating useful input.

*Paraverbal Techniques*

Following Pennycook (1985), "paraverbal" here refers to Molly's adaptations in those aspects of her speech not pertaining to the linguistic structure and content of that speech. This category also subsumes Wells and Robinson's (1982) $L_1$ input categories of "manner of delivery" and "prosody" and Hatch's $L_1$ and $L_2$ categories of "suprasegmentals" and "phonology".

Molly adapted the paraverbal features of her input to her ESL class using several of the same techniques used by parents providing $L_1$ input to their infants. First, like most parents, Molly slowed down the rate of her speech delivery and employed longer and more frequent pauses as she worked with her heterogeneous group of students. Often these pauses took the form of nonverbal comprehension checks (waiting for a student or students to indicate comprehension) or invitations to interact (waiting for a student or students to say something or to interact in some other manner). The rate of Molly's speech and the pauses therein were adapted in response to the input Molly was receiving from her students, and varied dramatically depending on the composition of the student group within each of her events. This was especially noticeable in Molly's small group events when she conducted the same activity with from three to five different groups of children in rapid succession.

Molly also increased the use of *vocalizations* in her speech in order to illustrate paraverbally what she was saying in English. This strategy was well in keeping with Molly's heavy use of theatrical-type techniques within her input and events, as subsequent sections will illustrate. In general, Molly's vocalizations were preceded or succeeded by the complete English utterances which these vocalizations were meant to illustrate, and also by nonverbal cues (see following section). Here are some examples of Molly's input, the first from the small group pancake cooking activity and the second from a full group story and discussion.

> Molly: (Takes spoon and licks it). Oo-oo-oo-h! (Eyes widen and lips purse.) Wow, this tastes good! (She rubs her stomach and draws her tongue across her top lip,

smiling, while she vocalizes.) U-m-m-m-m! This tastes yummy! (Videotape, June 30)

Molly: Make a frog's sound. How do they sound? (She makes her eyes bulge out, drops her chin, and lowers her voice.) Rr-rr-rr-ivet! Rr-rr-rr-ivet! (She raises her head and raises her voice and smiles.) Come on! (Observation notes, July 6)

As these examples illustrate, Molly's vocalizations primarily served as cues to the meaning of her utterances (Ventriglia, 1982). They also served to sustain her interaction with her students and to help her create a supportive and interesting tone within her input, again helping her to meet her main criteria for making her input useful.

The most frequest paraverbal input technique that Molly used in her summer ESL input was that of varying her intonation and/or volume in order to emphasize (or "punch up," as she called it) certain key words or phrases in her ongoing discourse. As with her other paraverbal techniques, Molly almost invariably combined this use of intonation/volume contrast with nonverbal strategies. All of the italicized words in Molly's classroom discourse segments that have already been provided here are examples of this technique, e.g. "Look here, everybody needs to put *one egg* in their cup." from the pancake event, and "You have to *fold* it." from the paper-towel folding event.

*Nonverbal Techniques*

In recent years there has been considerable investigation of the nonverbal aspects of intercultural communication inside and outside the classroom (e.g. Erickson & Schultz, 1982; Wolfgang, 1977; Gumperz & Cook-Gumperz, 1981; Erickson & Mohatt, 1982; Philips, 1983). There has also been considerable discussion of the role that nonverbal communication might play in the regular teaching process (e.g. Smith, 1979; Woolfolk & Brooks, 1985; Woolfolk & Galloway, 1985) and of the use of nonverbal communication as part of the $L_2$ clasroom curriculum in order to develop full communicative competence (e.g. Nine-Curt, 1976; Pennycook, 1985). Much less investigation and discussion has taken place of the nonverbal aspects of $L_1$ and $L_2$ input, as has already been pointed out in the first section of this paper.

With regard to $L_1$ input research, it is only in the last five years that the nonverbal aspects of motherese and caretaker talk have been examined, this in spite of a general consensus amongst linguists studying childrens' language that one of the primary sources an infant has for securing the meaning of a new word is the nonlinguistic context in

which that word is used (e.g. H. Clark & E. Clark, 1977; J. deVilliers & P. deVilliers, 1978). Schaffer, Hepburn and Collis (1983) summarize this problem in a humorous vein:

> It is . . . not only the concurrent activities of the child but also the mother's own nonverbal behavior that may be regarded as part of the context in which speech is embedded. There has been little research into the communicative role of maternal gestures and other child-directed actions that accompany speech; indeed studies of maternal language characteristics commonly seem to assume that the only part of the mother that is moving is her mouth. (p. 338)

Recent studies of $L_1$ input have confirmed the presence and use of nonverbal behavior as part of the $L_1$ teaching and learning process. One of the main conclusions of this limited body of research is that mothers use gestures primarily in order to focus and maintain their infants' attention rather than to provide meaning, although a developmental description of caretaker nonverbal behavior and its relation to the child's ongoing behavior is as yet undeveloped (Schaffer & Crook, 1980; Schnur & Shatz, 1984).

With regard to the $L_2$ input research again much of the evidence for the presence and use of nonverbal behavior as part of "foreigner talk" is sketchy and anecdotal. Ventriglia (1982) presents what may be the fullest treatment of the role that nonverbal behavior plays in $L_2$ input to children, citing "visual" and "gestural" cues as two of the techniques used by teachers and peers to both focus attention and communicative meaning in the $L_2$ classroom. Ventriglia concludes from her study and her review of the relevant literature that "the more modalities a second-language learner can exercise in learning a word, the more easily the student will master it and the better he or she will retain it. The total number of modalities has an additive and positive effect on language learning" (p. 74).

Turning to the present study, it is apparent that Molly came to much the same conclusion through her instruction as Ventriglia (1982); Molly made increasingly active use of the nonverbal modality in her ongoing interaction with her students as the summer session progressed. These adaptations in the nonverbal aspects of Molly's instructional input have been hinted at in the previous discussion of her discourse and paraverbal techniques, and like these other techniques, were discovered and described through the use of both participant observation and videotape data-collection techniques.

One of the adaptations Molly made in her nonverbal behavior during her ESL teaching experience was to develop an ongoing set of *gestures* to accompany her speech. At first these gestures appeared to be used

more out of desperation than out of conscious planning, appearing as one aspect of Molly's struggle to get her ESL children to participate in activities with the rest of the group. The primary gesture Molly used during these difficult first days of school was the same (pointing + object/locale) gesture that has been identified in the $L_1$ literature. For example, when an ESL boy did not seem to understand the command to go to the sink to wash his hands, Molly repeated the instructions with large pointing gestures:

> Molly: Go wash your hands. Like Kobi (Points to the sink.) Go over there. (Makes sweeping motion from child towards the sink.) Go over there and wash your hands. (Observation notes, June 30)

By the second week of school, however, Molly had added much more sophisticated gestures to her object and action references. These gestures accompanied Molly's use of what she considered to be new and/or unfamiliar terms in class, and in general were a sort of gestural illustration of the meaning of the terms.[9] For example, on one occasion when Molly was joking with the class about a child's mother cutting his hair with a hammer, she made hammering motions above the child's head. Then, when the students uproariously corrected her with the appropriate term ("scissors"), she too corrected her gesture and made snipping and cutting motions around the hair of the same boy.

Molly also significantly increased her use of *bodily motions* in her interaction with her summer ESL class. The first step in this adjustment came during the first six days of school when Molly shifted from spending the majority of her time sitting down as she taught to spending the majority of her time crouching or standing up as she taught, across all events. One of the apparent reasons for this shift was the increased mobility and freedom of movement that the latter positions gave her.

In general, Molly's adaptations of her bodily motions developed in synchrony with her adaptations of her gestures, and these adaptations served to broaden Molly's ability to illustrate the meaning of her utterances from mere gestural demonstrations to full body demonstrations (i.e. pantomimes). Thus in addition to gestural demonstrations such as hammering and cutting, by the end of the first week of summer school Molly was also hopping on one foot to illustrate "hopping," swaying back and forth with her hands outraised to indicate "trees in the wind," and huddling on the floor and covering her neck and head with her hands to illustrate "being scared!" By the end of the first week of school Molly had also extended her use of hand gestures and bodily motions into two specific new classroom events. These events will be discussed in the following section, and will further illustrate Molly's

extensive use of bodily motions as part of her ongoing input.

The final nonverbal technique that Molly incorporated into her ongoing interaction with her summer students was her use of facial *expressions*. Molly used facial expressions for two primary purposes. As with her gestures and bodily motions, Molly used her face to illustrate her discourse, especially to illustrate expressions of affect. For example, on the fifth day of school during a full group discussion of birthdays, Molly illustrated how someone would feel if everyone forgot her or his birthday by drooping her body and putting on a sad face, and then contrasted this verbally and nonverbally with how that person would feel if someone were to give her or him a birthday cake, smiling and opening her eyes wide in "surprise." Molly often used facial expressions to depict different characters in stories she read to the class, accompanying her reading and her facial expressions with paraverbal techniques to depict various characters' voices and with props to also symbolize the characters. Story-reading rapidly became a multimodality performance in Molly's ESL classroom. Further examples of Molly's use of facial expressions may also be found in the previously cited examples of her vocalization techniques.

Molly also used facial expressions to assist her in accomplishing her goal of getting and sustaining her students' interest and participation. As Molly put it, she wanted to help her ESL students to "develop a positive attitude toward using and learning English" and to create a classroom environment where they would "dare to risk speaking English." Molly used her nonverbal facial expressions as children talked or participated in order to show them that she was listening and wanted them to go on. Molly's facial expressions during students' turns in conversations across all events and groupings seemed to indicate both expectancy (that the students would continue) and encouragement or approval. This occurred as part of her responses to individual student initiations (as when an ESL girl came to her to request assistance in putting on an apron) and in her nonverbal behavior after calling on an individual student or students during a lesson (as when individual students were called upon to share what they had done during a school holiday). In general, Molly used facial expressions, variations in intonation, nonverbal "place holders," and pauses within her input to sustain her conversation with individual students. She then combined these techniques with her re-organization of her groupings and events to create a set of classroom expectations that all classroom members would treat one another as valued members of the classroom community and that all classroom members would participate as fully as they were able in all classroom events.[10]

*Sensory Aids*

The second major category of techniques that Molly developed to maximize the usefulness of her ongoing classroom input was her incorporation of *sensory aids* into her instruction. "Sensory" is used here to connote classroom materials chosen to tap all five of the students' senses in order to aid their understanding and attention. This adaptation was considerably facilitated by Molly's use of events directly relating to the five senses as a major component of her summer curriculum (e.g. her color theme).

Two of Molly's adaptations in her use of classroom materials were exclusively visual ones: her increased use of pictures and photos and her increased use of sketches on the blackboard or on the chart-paper she kept in the classroom. The use of visual aids to assist comprehension in the ESL classroom is hardly new, and discussion of the values and various uses of visual aids can be found in both general methods books (e.g. Stevick, 1982; Krashen & Terrell, 1983) and in books totally devoted to this specific topic (e.g. Wright, 1976; Yunus, 1981). While Molly was not aware of these discussions, she became quickly aware of the usefulness of accompanying her discourse with visual aids to accomplish her twin goals of focusing attention and improving understanding.

By the sixth day of the summer session, Molly had incorporated a visual component into every one of her planned events throughout the school day, as Table 2 illustrates. In addition, Molly relied on her own sketching skills and the blackboard and chart-paper to provide this visual component when an unanticipated topic arose. For example, when three ESL boys were pretending to "fly" toy trucks as airplanes during a free choice period and Molly wanted to point out that their "planes" did not have wings, she drew a makeshift airplane with an arrow pointing to the wing on the blackboard near the boy's play area. As with many of Molly's input strategies, this visual strategy was picked up by the students too, and they soon began to use the blackboard to explain things to one another also. For example, during another free choice time, two girls drew their houses for each other with the English-speaking girl providing the oral accompaniment to the activity, and during yet another free choice activity, a mixed group of ESL and English-speaking boys and girls assigned parts in a spontaneous skit to each other by drawing their characters on the blackboard.

As Table 2 indicates, Molly often used actual "real world" objects, or realia, as visual aids in the classroom, but these same objects were also used to incorporate other senses into students' language experience and input processing. For example, Molly used "M and M's" in the color graphing event (individualized/cooperative) not only to visually

Table 2
*Molly's Events and Sensory Aids on the Sixth Day of School (Week 2/Day 2)*

| Event | Sensory Aid |
|---|---|
| Expectation Meeting (FG) | Blackboard poster board, materials all around the room. |
| Tissue Paper Art (SG) | Art materials |
| "M and M's" Color Graphing (Indiv./Coop.) | "M and M's", tumblers, paper, markers |
| Alligator Rhyme (FG)* | Toy alligator and frog, real log, paper |
| Snack (FG) | Food, eating implements |
| Kickball (FG) | Ball, Game Boundaries, black-board (for introductions) |
| Ball Games (FG) | Different balls and game implements |
| "M and M's" Graph review (FG) | "M and M's", graphs, colored paper |
| 1 color "M and M's" eating (FG) | "M and M's, colored paper |

illustrate the colors, but also to incorporate the sense of taste into the activity. Each day a different color was indicated as the one which would be eaten by the students. Similarly, children smelled the beets and blueberries that were used in a natural dyeing activity as they talked and learned about what they were doing, they felt their tissue paper samples before and after they put liquid starch on them, and they saw and felt and smelled their fish when they made fish prints with real fish and paint.

Molly used cooking frequently to provide as many simultaneous sensory aids to her students as possible, and stated after the summer was over that if she were to do the summer experience over again, she would have at least one cooking activity per day in her ESL curriculum. After the first two of these cooking events had taken place, Molly also added sketches and words to the cooking events in the form of rebus recipes on chart-paper which she used to focus and supplement their concrete experience with the ingredients and cooking implements. As an example, Figure 2 presents an approximation of the rebus recipe Molly used during the pancake cooking event excerpted earlier in this paper.

*Figure 2.* Sample Rebus Recipe (Pancakes)*
(Taken from videotape, July 12)

Although Molly's use of realia and visual aids in her classroom was frequent and consistent, it wasn't easy. Indeed, Molly pointed to the continuous collecting of classroom materials as her main summer teaching burden, joking that:

> What you need is a big closet out in the corridor with every concrete object you could ever need to pull out when you need it. (Triangulation interview, October 25)

Molly also indicated that having already collected a larger number of pictures and realia would be the part of her summer experience that would help the most of make her job easier were she to continue with ESL teaching.

Molly's fourth sensory aid was her use of *recordings* (records and cassettes) in order to incorporate children's hearing into their processing of classroom input. Molly's use of vocalizations to illustrate her language has already been pointed out; in addition, Molly used recordings of natural sounds (e.g. animals, animal habitats) and recordings of songs and stories to add an auditory dimension to her provision of input. Another application of this technique consisted of having students record themselves talking and then having them listen to the results. (Tables 3 and 4, presented later, also provide some examples of specific events in which recordings were used.)

*Students*

Another major classroom resource that Molly used to adapt her input to suit all of the students' needs was the students themselves. Recall that Molly, like all of the teachers in the summer session, had English-speaking students assigned to her room and was evaluated on how well she taught them as well as on how well she used them in the classroom to assist in teaching English. Molly met this requirement in three ways.

First, Molly used her students as the "teachers" or the demonstrators in her full group and small group events. Often students would provide the key language to be taught or would present, demonstrate and/or narrate the key concepts, actions, and language within a given event. Sometimes this modeling occurred in addition to Molly's own input, as when Molly asked an English-speaking girl to "tell the class again what three activities they can choose this morning", and sometimes it occurred in place of Molly's input as when Molly asked an English-speaking boy to "tell the class what we did today."

Second, Molly used her students as tutors for one another. The main kind of tutoring that Molly facilitated was communicative, placing English-speaking students with one or more ESL students to work

together on a given task requiring specific communicative abilities. For example, Molly deliberately designed pairs of students of different language backgrounds and levels of $L_2$ competence to the Blocks Center, an event which required cooperative language use in order to be successfully completed. However, Molly worked to create other kinds of tutoring situations as well; for example, assigning students of different interactive styles to one another to "teach each other different ways of behaving with friends," and assigning ESL students with particularly well-developed skills or content knowledge to work with English-speaking peers with less-developed knowledge and skills. With regard to this strategy, Molly reported that one of the reasons she included art activities so often in her summer instruction was because she found that many of her ESL students excelled in this area and found it very enjoyable, so they were then able to concentrate their attention on the linguistic dimensions of the task. As Molly put it, "if they feel good about themselves and confident in what they are doing, I know that they will dare to risk speaking English." (Informal interview, July 7)

Finally, Molly used her students as conversational partners, subtly emphasizing the benefits of helping each other and of working and playing together in all of her instructional events. Children's initiations in Molly's classroom were consistently rewarded rather than sanctioned: what might have been interpreted as cheating or talking out of turn in some classrooms was interpreted as helping in Molly's classroom. The strategies Molly used for creating this atmosphere of cooperation, and comfortable and useful peer interaction are described in full detail elsewhere (Enright & Gomez, 1985), but they include strategies such as specifically targeting certain areas of the classroom for relaxed social interaction, drawing attention to all students' contributions to the classroom, and having consistent interactive expectations related to how students will talk with and work with one another.

*Events*

Besides adapting her ongoing classroom input to maximize its usefulness using students, sensory aids, and herself, Molly also purposefully redesigned her curriculum early in the summer to integrate all of these input adaptations together by greatly increasing the use of two types of events with similar introductory segments that she had tried out and found particularly useful on the first day of school. Molly called these two events "concrete experiences" (see Table 3) and "acting out" (see Table 4).

Table 3
*Molly's Concrete Experience Events (Demonstration + Concrete Experience)*

| Week & Day | Demonstration* |
|---|---|
| *Week 1:* | |
| Day 1 | Making Playdough (SG) |
| Day 2 | Making Birthday hats (SG) |
| Day 2 | Making Birthday cake (SG) |
| Day 3 | Color Experimenting (Indiv.) |
| Day 3 | Outdoors/Bubbles (FG) |
| Day 4 | Cellophane Experiment (SG) |
| Day 4 | Paper Towel Dipping (SG) |
| Day 5 | Making Invitations (FG) |
| Day 5 | Fieldtrip/Color Walk Introduction (FG) |
| *Week 2:* | |
| Day 1 | (No School: 4th of July) |
| Day 2 | Tissue Paper Art (SG) |
| Day 2 | Outdoors/Kickball (FG) |
| Day 2 | "M and M's" Graphing (Indiv.) |
| Day 3 | Glitter and Glue (SG) |
| Day 3 | Dyeing Eggs (SG) |
| Day 3 | Ordering Shades of Color (FG) |
| Day 4 | Self-Portraits (SG) |
| Day 4 | Flannelboard Story (FG) |
| Day 5 | Fieldtrip/Library Introduction (FG) |
| *Week 3:* | |
| Day 1 | Shoe-and-Foot-prints (SG) |
| Day 1 | Color Blending Center Introduction (FG) |
| Day 2 | Cooking Pancakes (SG) |
| Day 2 | Outside/Duck, Duck, Goose Game (FG) |
| Day 3 | Tape Recorder & Certificate (Indiv.) |
| Day 3 | Blow Painting (SG) |
| Day 3 | Natural Dyes (FG) |
| Day 3 | Outside/Ball Game (FG) |
| Day 4 | Fieldtrip/Outside/Relays (SG) |
| Day 5 | Blocks Center Introduction (FG) |
| Day 5 | Water Colors (SG) |
| *Week 4:* | |
| Day 1 | (Trip to Pet Store) |
| Day 2 | Pine Cone Feeders (FG) |
| Day 2 | Tye Dying T-Shirts (SG) |
| Day 3 | Fish Printing (FG) |

*(continued)*

Table 3 *(continued)*

| | |
|---|---|
| Day 4 | Finger Painting (SG) |
| Day 4 | Cooking Sesame Honey Balls (FG) |
| Day 5 | Tissue Paper & Starch (SG) |

**Note*: The letters in parentheses indicate the grouping Molly used for that demonstration. FG = Full group, SG = Small group, Indiv. = Individual Student.

Table 4
*Molly's Acting Out Events* (Demonstration + Acting Out)*

| Week & Day | Event |
|---|---|
| *Week 1:* | |
| Day 1 | Acting Out Songs |
| Day 1 | Acting Out Story |
| Day 2 | Outdoors/Jump the River Game |
| Day 3 | Acting Out Poem (Teddy Bear) |
| Day 4 | Acting Out Song |
| Day 4 | Acting Out Story |
| *Week 2:* | |
| Day 1 | (No School: 4th of July) |
| Day 2 | Finger Play, Alligator Rhyme** |
| Day 2 | Outdoors/Jump the River |
| Day 2 | Acting Out Songs |
| Day 3 | Finger Play |
| Day 4 | Finger Play |
| *Week 3:* | |
| Day 1 | Acting Out Song |
| Day 1 | Acting Out Poem (Verbs) |
| Day 2 | Finger Plays |
| Day 5 | Acting Out Songs |
| Day 5 | Finger Plays |
| Day 5 | Outdoors/Acting Out Poem (Adjectives) |
| *Week 4:* | |
| Day 1 | Acting Out Animals (Field Trip Introduction) |
| Day 2 | Body Language |
| Day 4 | Acting Out Song |

**Note*: *All of Molly's Acting Out events were conducted in the full group setting.

**This acting out event is presented in detail in the following section of the paper.

*Concrete experience* actually refers to a two-part event Molly used in her classroom. In the first (demonstration) part of this event, Molly explained and demonstrated a particular task. Then in the second (concrete experience) part of the event, either the full group engaged in the planned experience immediately after its demonstration (e.g. playing an outdoor game, checking out books), or small groups engaged in the planned experiences at several designated times (e.g. one small group doing a color blending activity each day of the week following a Monday demonstration of the activity). It should be pointed out here that Table 3 presents a misleading view of how frequently Molly used this two-part event, since only the first occasion of each event's occurence is recorded in the Table, whereas in actuality several of them were reviewed and repeated throughout the summer. For example, "kickball" was introduced early in Week 2 but was then reviewed and played on two subsequent occasions.

It was in the demonstration segment of this two-part event that Molly combined all of her input strategies to make her input as useful as possible to the entire class. For example, here is how Molly herself described her introduction of her first learning center to the full group (Week 3/Day 1):

> Part of my center requires the children to make a Color Blob Animal by putting paint in the center of the paper, folding, seeing new animals and then drawing new parts to the blob. I had so *much* language and I would like to look at the activity and figure out why.
>
> I had a chart that had words plus the pictures of the steps. I demonstrated and had individual children use words to tell what I was doing – GREAT. Then I had a child show the steps and had many others tell the rest of the class the instructions. The anticipation and possibly getting a turn was a real motivator to stay on task and they really enjoyed telling what to do. (Personal journal, July 10)

Molly's demonstration and having children "show the steps" and "tell what to do" above included such steps as showing the students how to mix their paint, how to pour it, how to spread it on the paper, how to fold the paper and how to unfold it and draw on it, etc., all the time talking about or having students talk about what was happening. In most of Molly's concrete experience events, as in this example, her demonstration of the procedures for the subsequent concrete experience was done using the same actual materials that the students were to use.

The Color Blob activity described in the journal entry cited above is a good example of Molly's use of demonstration to provide interesting

and understandable input to her students followed by an organized experience to provide an opportunity for students themselves to manipulate the same materials, tasks, and language that had previously been used. Addditional input was provided during this second segment if it was needed by an adult or a student peer. As has already been pointed out, this also led to a large portion of the day being alloted to small group and individualized events in Molly's classroom, and to her continuous rephrasing and recycling of language throughout the summer session.

The other specific event that Molly created to incorporate all of her input techniques together and to provide maximally useful input to her class was what she called *acting out* (see Table 4). This event also consisted of two parts, a demonstration segment which resembled the demonstration segment of the concrete experience event, and then some acting out by the class with Molly.

In the demonstration segment of this event, Molly again used all or almost all of her input techniques to introduce a poem, a finger play, a story, or a song to the full group, asking them to just listen to it so that they could then work with her to learn it. Molly then recited/sang the target selection repeating it from one to four times depending on her judgment of how difficult the selection was and how the students were responding to her recitation. As in the demonstration segment of the concrete experience event, this demonstration segment always included the use of sensory aids, paraverbal techniques and nonverbal techniques. It also usually included the utilization of student responses and student modelling and recitation. For example, in the "Outdoors/ Jump the River Game" (Week 2/Day 2), first Molly explained what a river was with help from English-speaking children. Then she explained the game rules, demonstrated a successful and unsuccessful jump, and demonstrated how to widen the long poles making up the river, talking and asking questions as she went. Then she had two students demonstrate and narrate the game procedures for the class. Only then did the jumping of the imaginary river begin. Similarly, in one of her "Acting Out a Story" events (Week 1/Day 4), Molly read the book *Little Blue and Little Yellow* (Lionni, 1959) to the children, showing them the pictures in the book and also repeating, rephrasing, and using nonverbal input as she read. Then she used blue and yellow stripes of colored cellophane to demonstrate the book narrative, including placing the two strips of cellophane together to make a new color (green) as in the story. Mollly rephrased the story in her own words during this part of the demonstration as well. Only then was it time for the children to act out.

The second segment of Molly's acting out events consisted of full group participation (singing, reciting, pantomiming, acting) using the

language and actions she had demonstrated and modeled in the first segment. Molly's role in this segment was to lead the performance and to try to get everyone to participate. Continuing with the previous examples, in the "Outdoor/Jump the River Game's" acting out segment, the entire class took turns jumping and widening the river until only two childen were left who hadn't "fallen in." Molly verbally monitored their actions, throughout this segment, conversing with individual students about the game, joking with students who missed about how wet and cold they must be after falling into the river, leading cheers, etc. In the Acting Out a Story event, the children themselves received blue and yellow strips of cellophane and had their characters perform the actions described in the story as Molly re-read the book another time.

*Contextual Contrast*

All of Molly's input adaptations that have been described up to this point were created by her to add interest and to add meaning to the overall discourse being constructed in her classroom. Whether it was through using a gesture, using a paraphrase, or choreographing a student demonstration, one of Molly's primary summer teaching goals appeared to be to add enough information and to create enough context in her classroom interaction so that all of her students would have access to the language and concepts she was introducing. In organizing her early childhood classroom through the summer in this way, Molly took a pedogogical stance in close agreement to the theoretical stance enunciated by Cook-Gumperz (1977) and many others that:

> the interpretive features which adults background, such as kinesic gestures, physical features of setting, prosodic information, all provide information that enters equally into the child's interpretation of the ongoing communicative event. The child judges the social intent or effect of the verbal message equally by its *situated* character (emphasis hers), the manner and physical setting in which it is performed, as much as by the semantic-syntactic form of the message. (pp. 104-105)

Since children in general use the surrounding context in order to understand language, it would seem likely that children learning a second language would depend at least equally or perhaps even more on the surrounding context in using and developing their $L_2$. At least Molly acted as if this were true.

Cook-Gumperz (1977) also suggests that final full "proficiency" or "communicative competence" in the $L_1$ or the $L_2$ will only be achieved

if and when children are able to utilize language itself as the primary vehicle for both the comprehension and the production of discourse, without reference to its extralinguistic contexts and certainly without recourse to any contextual cues. This in turn seems to imply that if $L_2$ teachers are to succeed in their task, it will be necessary for them to find ways, in Cook-Gumperz' words, to support the "initial acquisition of some semantic-syntactic competency" (i.e. minimal communication skills) that must be attained early in the development of the target language, and support the development of "the gradual dominance of lexicalized intent" (i.e. use of language by itself) that is the mark of full proficiency in that language.

If Cook-Gumperz' assertions here are correct, then Molly was not only faced with a group of students from a wide variety of interests, cultural backgrounds, English experience, etc., but she was also faced with a group of students with a wide variety of levels of development of using language alone to carry their meaning in either their $L_1$ or their $L_2$. Molly's way of dealing with this kind of diversity was to continually contextualize and re-contextualize her input and her students' own language use both within and across her classroom events. This use of *contextual contrast* as an input strategy was accomplished in three primary ways.

First, Molly avoided contextual contrast to give her ESL students regular opportunities to gain initial semantic-syntactic competency by establishing regular, predictable classroom events in which she employed not only similar linguistic forms, but also a similar set of input adaptations and contextual conventions of the sort described in this paper. This strategy closely resembles a similar one identified in the parental $L_1$ input research, variously referred to as "routines" (e.g. Bruner, 1975; Snow & Goldfield, 1983), "episodes" (e.g. Messer, 1980) and "scaffolds" (Ninio & Brunner, 1978). Bruner and his colleagues point to the "peekaboo" game (Ratner & Bruner, 1978) and book reading time (Ninio & Bruner, 1978) as examples of such routinized speech events, during which a specific script (dialogue + actions) is at first produced entirely by the parent and then is gradually taken over by the infant as the infant gains the ability to enact it.

Early in the second week of summer school Molly began to fashion a series of classroom events or routines with predictable attributes, including conversational conventions. As one example, Molly established a daily event during Week 2 which she called an "Expectation Meeting". This always occurred at the same time (just after the beginning of the school day), in the same grouping (full group), in the same place (on the carpet with group movement to different locales if specific materials were to be reviewed), and with the same question-answer sequences being used (e.g. one to three students would be asked to

review the activities to be chosen that day for the class and each child would be asked to indicate what they planned to do that day in some manner). As the summer progressed, Molly began to "raise her communicative ante" during these meetings so that by the end of the summer, ESL students were taking on the sociolinguistic roles within Molly's expectation meeting "scripts" that had previously been filled by English-speaking students and the more fluent students were in turn taking over Molly's role. Molly demarcated and formalized the demonstration sequences of the two events described in the previous section to accomplish much the same effect.

Molly also employed contextual contrast within her classroom input to create different situations or contexts for the same input *within a single event* and *across different events*. Molly called this "using language in new ways." These strategies were primarily utilized during the demonstration segments of the acting out events described earlier. Using these strategies, Molly first presented the key language to be used in a given event within a concrete, immediate context by using various forms of realia. This introductory segment most resembled the practice and repetition that is typically found in classes where the audiolingual language teaching method is being employed.

Once Molly was satisfied that her students had a working knowledge of the key language and concepts she wished to teach, she would then shift the context within the event so that the students would be practicing the language and concepts of the event utilizing a different set of supporting cues. Molly most often accomplished this shift by replacing realia with nonverbal cues such as gestures and bodily motions, often used by the students themselves. As Molly became convinced that her students were again using her target language and concepts appropriately within this new (and less concrete) context, she would continue to shift the context for using it until the students were using it alone to carry out the communicative demands of the activity. This shifting of contexts and using language in new ways would then continue *across* subsequent classroom events until the children were using the same language but in completely different situations and for different communicative ends, thereby facilitating the "gradual dominance of lexicalized intent" described by Cook-Gumperz (1977, p. 105).

One good illustration of Molly's use of contextual contrast within and across events is her summer teaching of a finger play called "The Alligator Rhyme," which she introduced in an acting out event (Week 2/Day 2).[11]

Molly began this event by introducing all of the key elements of the rhyme to the group by presenting either the actual object referred to in the rhyme (e.g. a real log) or its concrete representation (e.g. a plastic

alligator, a piece of blue paper for water). She also asked questions about each object as she introduced it, focusing on the object's various properties (e.g. "What sound does a frog make?") and on its relation to the other objects and concepts in the event (e.g. "What do alligators and frogs swim in?"). Molly then introduced the rhyme itself by manipulating the realia she had introduced within her familiar cycle of (a) teacher demonstrate and narrate, (b) individual student(s) demonstrate and narrate, and (c) full group demonstrate and narrate (see "events" section). In this particular event, Molly was the only one who actually manipulated the realia, performing the actions of making the plastic alligator "jump" and making the real log "roll" each time that the rhyme was narrated.

Once Molly observed that everyone was responding to the rhyme and once she felt that her students' attention was in danger of waning, she shifted the context of the rhyme from her concrete objects to a specific set of illustrating gestures and bodily motions for each character and each action in the rhyme. Thus the plastic alligator turned into an opening and closing mouth made by a hand, the real log became a bent arm, and the action of "sitting on a log" shifted from the plastic alligator and the real log to the children's hands resting on their bent arms. This shift was carefully and explicitly executed in full view of the children and with their active participation, so that by its conclusion the supporting context for the entire rhyme had shifted from Molly and her realia to the students themselves. The event concluded with Molly and the entire class narrating and acting out the rhyme together.

Molly then extended her contextual contrast across events by employing the alligator rhyme on two other occasions. Two days after the original introducton of the rhyme, Molly re-introduced it to the full group and on this occasion she provided four contrasting contexts for the rhyme language and content. The first two of these contexts were repetitions of the previous concrete objects and gestural/movement contexts. Then Molly introduced a new recitation-like context in which various individual students and then the full group repeated the entire rhyme with no contextual cues (i.e. focusing only on the lexicon). Molly then concluded this second alligator rhyme event by asking children to create new utterances using the rhyme language and concepts (e.g. students created "Away swims the duck" and "Away swims the fish"). This fourth context resembled a sort of creative, meaning-based version of an audiolingual substitution drill, with students providing their own slot fillers for the target sentences (in this case, lines from the rhyme).

Finally, after yet another week had passed, Molly introduced the alligator rhyme to her students for the last time during the summer session (on Week 3/Day 5) as part of a review of several of the songs and

finger plays the class had learned up to that point. During this event, Molly had the class recite and sing a number of songs and rhymes, had them compare the language and ideas within the verses to each other, and had them choose their favorite ones and provide reasons for their choices, thereby creating a fifth contrasting context for using the alligator rhyme language in ways unrelated to the original structure and context of the rhyme itself.

This review of all three of the occasions in which Molly explicitly used the alligator rhyme to provide communicative instructional input demonstrates her skillful construction of successively more abstract and more creative meaning-based contexts for her students' language use and her consistent efforts to encourage her students to try out their communicative skills in new settings and in new ways. Molly was careful to provide a *variety* of language use opportunities within her ESL classroom in order to provide the much needed concrete contexts for gaining initial competency that her ESL students required, and yet also to provide the more formal and abstract contexts for gaining adult-like (lexicon only) competency that her English-speaking students required. Thus contextual contrast became one more way for Molly to meet her criteria for providing useful input to the entire class. This variety of contexts was in clear evidence in Molly's classroom from Week 2 on, and was a mediator of all of the other input techniques that have been reported here.

*A Note on "Decontextualization"*

The process of lexical foregrounding which Cook-Gumperz (1977) described and which Molly attended to her use of contextual contrast within her ESL classroom has been the subject of considerable speculation in the last few years. Writing about this same notion with regard to young $L_1$ acquirers' development of all literacy skills, Wells (1981) writes:

> What the child has to develop . . . is an enhanced awareness of the *symbolic* properties of linguistic representations: the realization that the meaning and implications of a message depend upon the precise linguistic formulation of that message and upon the internal relations and consistency between its constituent parts, rather than upon any necessary correspondence between the message and the perception or memories of the extralinguistic context(s) to which the message might apply. (p. 252)

In this same essay, Wells takes the position shared by several language researchers (e.g. Cummins, 1980; Snow, 1983; 1985; Cochran-Smith,

1984; Saville-Troike, 1984) that in order for one to become a fully competent speaker, reader, and writer (i.e. in order to become literate) in a given language, one must develop the ability to understand and manipulate that language at a purely symbolic level without reference to the here and now of the extralinguistic context in which that language occurs. Wells also points out that in most fully literate cultures, the locus for the development of this ability is the formal educational system: a place "that is separated from the context of immediately relevant activity and which, by virtue of that separation, is heavily dependent for the representation and manipulation of experience on the explicit symbolization which is most characteristically found in written language" (pp. 252-253).

Unfortunately, the term that has come to be used to commonly refer to lexical foregrounding and using language at the symbolic level is "decontextualized" language use (e.g. Snow, 1983; 1985; Cochran-Smith, 1984).[12] Apparently, the "de" in decontextualized is used to signify "not tied to the context." Thus Snow (1983) uses "giving metalinguistic judgments" such as "judging sentences as either grammatical or ungrammatical" as a possible example of oral decontextualized language use (p. 183).

The reason that this particular label is an unfortunate one is that the term *decontextualized* leaves room for a much broader theoretical and practical interpretation than the one presented above. What the term could be used to imply is that somewhere there exists a variety of language use that may occur without depending on *any context at all*. This is a proposition of dubious theoretical merit and potentally damaging pedagogical application, and one which therefore calls for some scrutiny.

Elliot G. Mishler (1979) provides one of the most cogent demonstrations of the fallacy of suggesting that any use of language can take place without attending to the multiple contexts within which it is produced in his answer to the "rhetorical" question posed in the title of his paper "Meaning in Context: Is There Any Other Kind?":

> Essentially, I would argue that our understanding of the question as rhetorical is grounded in and dependent upon knowledge of the multiple contexts within which it appears. These contexts include the conference on educational research at which the paper was presented and the journal in which it now appears. From your understanding of these contexts, the question has prepared you for a critique of some aspect of educational research; you would be surprised if the paper should turn out otherwise. These complex understandings and anticipations have been generated with

> extraordinary speed by your ability to understand the contextually grounded meanings carried by this simple question. If so much meaning can be produced by a five-word utterance, consider how much more elaborated our understanding is likely to be of utterances or actions embedded in more ambiguous and swiftly moving streams of social interaction. (pp. 1-2).

What Mishler is pointing out here is that meaning is a *social construction*, whether it is created in the oral or the written mode. It is therefore a product of the multiple contexts which the human beings who participate in its social construction bring to that construction. Applying Mishler's argument to Snow's example of the act of judging a sentence to be grammatical or ungrammatical as a form of "decontextualized language use," it can be seen that that judgment actually takes place in a complex array of contexts: historical context of the judges' previous experience with metalinguistic judgments and with grammar and with sentences; the judges' reason(s) for giving the judgment or for complying with a request to give it; the attitudes and experiences and other characteristics of the audience receiving the judgment; or, the location of the judgment witthin the ongoing meaning construction (i.e. discourse) of the event in which this particular meaning construction occurs. All language use, whether at the purely symbolic level of metalinguistic judgments or at the concrete level of the here and now of immediate objects, actions, and experiences, involves the construction and communication of meanings. All meaning construction involves the contexts in which that construction takes place. Thus language use without context, like meaning without context, is a contradiction in terms.

The notion that all meaning is a social construction has also been specifically applied to the reading process (e.g. Rosenblatt, 1969; Bruce, 1981; Rigg, 1986) and the writing process (e.g. Graves, 1983; Hudelson, 1986) to define the interactional and "transactional" (Rosenblatt, 1969) features of these communication enterprises. As Mishler (1979) and many of these writers have pointed out, the problem with attending to the context in conducting research on these processes in the classroom is that a complete depiction of any one of them can never be reached; finite, written descriptions of meaning in context are of human necessity reductionist in nature and tend to reify and make static what in actuality are complex and dynamic processes. Even the multidimensional depiction of the developmental, nonverbal and interactive attributes of Molly's input presented in this paper vastly over-simplify the "true" dynamic meaning of that input as it was constructed by Molly and her students. Thus educational researchers

are often faced with the unhappy task of either trying to avoid the contexts of their investigations completely (Mishler calls this "context-stripping") or to make choices about which aspects of these contexts they will consider.

The misuse of the term decontextualized also has potentially adverse instructional interpretations. First, using the term to describe symbolic language use presents the opportunity for educators to interpret this "second level of representation of meaning" (Wells, 1981) as signifying language use with no need for meaning at all, thereby taking the critical aspects of intentionality and communication *out* of our view of language learning and teaching that researchers spent decades discovering and putting *into* it. Interpreting the term decontextualized in this manner, the classroom use of fragmented, isolated, purposeless, and meaningless language arts "skill sheets" and exercises can be justified anew by pointing to their "symbolic" and "decontextualized" natures (see Cazden, 1986).

Second, describing and discussing an interactive process in terms of a construct or skill such as "decontextualized language" use creates the potential for it then to be measured and found either present or absent in different children or groups of children, thereby creating a brand-new "deficit" which can then be used to hold children and their families responsible (rather than the educational system) for any lack of educational progress that might befall them. The "poor English" of the past can then become the "over-contextualized English" of the present.

Perhaps it would be more useful to view language use as Molly did; that is, as the construction and communication of meaning in a variety of settings and for a variety of purposes. Within this view of language use, communicative competence and full literacy become defined as one's capacity to construct and to communicate meaning across all of the settings one encounters and for all of the purposes one wishes to achieve. Using these definitions of language use and literacy, what is now referred to as decontextualized language use would become one of many possible forms of language use lying on a continuum from that language use which is totally dependent on the immediate concrete extralinguistic context (perhaps "concrete" language use) to that which is totally independent of the immediate extralinguistic context (perhaps "formal" language use). This kind of developmental continuum from concrete-operational to formal-abstract is hardly original. Jean Piaget posited much the same continuum for symbolism and cognitive development several decades ago (1926).

The value of replacing notions of decontextualized language use with this continuum in the language classroom is that it puts *meaning* back into all language use and *responsibility* for children's development of language use back onto the educational system. If one accepts the

notion that such a continuum exists, then it also becomes clear that what is to be done in the language classroom is to provide students with the kinds of language use experiences that they need to achieve full literacy through "bridging" (Ventriglia, 1982) from the contexts and forms of language use that they already have to those that they want and need to have. Molly's use of contextual contrast and all of her other input strategies with her diverse student group provides evidence that this indeed can be done.

## Some Conclusions

Several tentative conclusions may be made from this detailed and multifaceted description of a single teacher's input adaptations over the course of a one month teaching experience.

First, this description of the overlapping components of a single teacher's input over the course of a summer should help to make it clear that an adequate understanding and depiction of the interactive processes of language development will depend on a more holistic and multidimensional examination of that process, and one that encompasses the participants in that process in examinations of it. Indeed, if the recent application of ethnographic methods such as those applied in this investigation to study classrooms has contributed anything at all to the educational research enterprise, it is the notion that our traditional empirical conceptualization of the process of schooling has been severely oversimplified and (for teachers) has remained maddeningly and often insultingly far from what actually takes place in the classroom. As this paper has indicated, the range of verbal and nonverbal behaviors that teachers and students employ in participating in the daily life of the classroom is staggering. In many ways, teachers themselves have been ethnographers of sorts in their continual struggle to make sense of the new communities of students that arrive in their classrooms each year and to design a productive classroom environment for these students within the institutional demands and constraints ever pressing in upon them. Practitioners lamenting the lack of relevance and applicability of most educational research might well find the school ethnographer's primary question, what is it that is going on here? (McDermott & Gospodinoff, 1979), to be a refreshing attempt to re-enter the real world of the classroom that has always been there.

Second, this description should make it clear that there are a number of natural resources within both the ESL and the regular classroom for maximizing the comprehensibility of classroom input for ESL students. All too often we as language teaching professionals seek out the answers to persistent methodological problems in a magic new method or textbook or curriculum. The description of Molly's input techniques

provided here suggests that we would also do well to occasionally review what we already have operating in our classrooms, such as our own students and our own voices, in order to improve our instruction. Molly's response to the challenge presented by her culturally and linguistically diverse student group was to creatively "use everything she had" to provide a variety of language use opportunities within a supportive environment emphasizing both language learning and content learning. While it may not be possible nor even advisable for all teachers of ESL children to use all of the techniques in their instruction that Molly used in hers, it *is* possible for us to ask ourselves if we are using everything we already have to teach language.

It should also be clear to those of us who work with international children, if it wasn't already, that addressing the needs of these unique students is not an easy, one-step answer. As Molly put it, "It takes a very special kind of teacher to handle this kind of teaching" (Triangulation Interview, October 25). But it should be recalled that Molly herself did not create the intricate set of input techniques described in this paper instantly or effortlessly, but through constant exertion over time. Molly was often exhausted from the hard work of preparation and ESL teaching and was often uncertain about whether she was adequate to the task, two conditions she expressed on numerous occasions throughout her summer experience.

Molly used the following passage from Milne's *The House at Pooh Corner* to sum up her first day of ESL teaching:

> "Hallo, Eeyore," said Christopher Robin, as he opened the door and came out. "How are *you*?"
>
> "It's snowing still," said Eeyore gloomily.
>
> "So it is."
>
> *And* freezing."
>
> "Is it?"
>
> "Yes," said Eeyore. "However," he said, brightening up a little, "we haven't had an earthquake lately."
>
> (1982, p. 11)
>
> (Molly's Journal, June 27)

This quotation not only represents Molly's initial amazement at the new challenge that ESL teaching was offering her, but it also embodies the qualities of grace, optimism, and good humor which Molly used throughout the summer to triumph over her uncertainty and exhaustion and teach the way that she did. Molly combined these attributes with a high measure of professional self-respect and with a genuine

dedication to self-improvement, a dedication which she expressed by constantly re-assessing and revising her particular instruction to better suit her diverse students' needs. Given the present status of second language education in many of our schools, it would be hard to ask any more of teachers than this.

## Footnotes

[1]Other reviews of "motherese" and $L_1$ input can be found in H. Clark and E. Clark (1977), Snow and Ferguson (1977), J. de Villiers and P. de Villiers (1978), and Wells (1981).

[2]An example of a sentence fill-in would be:

ESL-speaker: I went downtown.
English-speaker: You went . . .?
ESL-speaker: Downtown. (Hatch 1983)

[3]An example of an occasional question would be:

ESL-speaker: I went downtown.
English-speaker: You went where?
ESL-speaker: Downtown. (Hatch 1983)

[4]H. Clark and E. Clark (1977) describe frames as familiar and often repeated phrases used to place unfamiliar new words into a familiar linguistic context. Examples of frames would be ["Here comes" + new noun] or ["Look at" + new noun].

[5]The other hypotheses in Krashen's $L_2$ acquisition model are the "natural order hyothesis," the "monitor hypothesis," and the "affective filter hypothesis." For a complete discussion of Krashen's theory, see Krashen (1980, 1982).

[6]For a review, see Larsen-Freeman (1985).

[7]With the exception of Molly, the rest of the summer school teachers were participating in the practicum as the conclusion of a 20 quarter hour (3 course) sequence of ESL teaching preparation courses.

[8]Events are segments of interaction devised by the teacher to implement her/his instructional agenda, and are usually defined by the teacher in terms of their groupings, their subject-matter and/or learning goal, their materials, and their locales (Mehan, 1982; Enright, 1984).

[9]Ekman and Friesen (1969) set forth a comprehensive categorization system for human nonverbal behavior derived from their own work and that of many others who study nonverbal behavior. One of the five major categories in this sytem Ekman and Friesen call "illustrators," and their description of these nonverbal behaviors as "movements which are directly tied to speech, serving to illustrate what is being said verbally" (1969: 68) closely resembles the illustrating gestures and bodily motions Molly developed in her summer ESL teaching.

[10]Molly's creation of a mutually supportive, participative classroom community is more fully described in Enright and Gomez (1985).

[11]The complete text of "The Alligator Rhyme" is as follows:

"Here is an alligator
sitting on a log.
Down in the pool
he sees a frog.
In goes the alligator,
around goes the log,
splash goes the water
and away swims the frog."

[12]Other terms that have been used to describe this phenomenon include "disimbedded language and thought" (Donaldson, 1978) and "context-reduced communication" (Cummins, 1980).

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# Endnote — Integrating Perspectives

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We call this book *Children and ESL: Integrating Perspectives* because we want to emphasize the integrative nature, not just of this volume, but of language learning, language teaching, and language study. Enright's article illustrates how complexly and closely woven into the children's ESL development are their teacher's language use and teaching practices. Urzúa's story of four Southeast Asian children lets us peep into their lives as they learn ESL, and we see vignettes of language development, vignettes showing us that it is not just the teacher, but also the classmates, the friends, the family, and even the researcher, who play parts in that development. Rigg's examination of readability in her analysis of texts gives us a hint of how the unexamined assumptions we use in choosing material to teach or to test affect our results, often without our being at all aware of the assumptions or their effects.

We have tried here to integrate the traditionally distinct perspectives between teachers and researchers. We believe that both teaching and research are enriched when the same people do both and when they see themselves as both teachers and researchers. This volume demonstrates language study integrated with language teaching and language learning. Urzúa shows us the Researcher learning from the Teacher as well as from the children, Enright shows the teacher learning from herself when she acts as researcher in her own class. This volume also illustrates a sort of collaborative research that we find very exciting. The section written by Hudelson, Rigg, and Urzúa uses the special knowledge of each contributor, but integrates that knowledge by having each researcher study different aspects of the same children. What did their collaboration teach these researchers? Are there any implications for these children's classrooms?

Both Hudelson and Urzúa refer to the children's writing. Hudelson's references are all to written products; Urzúa's include some references to what the children said during writing conferences and to what she observed in their classes. Urzúa drew us a clear picture of Vuong hunched over his paper, slowly and carefully copying each word onto a clean sheet. This information was not available to Hudelson because she was not there with the children. Hudelson prefers to analyze writing in process, rather than working only with written products. Hudelson also prefers to study authentic writing; that is, writing that

the children do for their own purposes and to audiences they themselves select. Much of the writing that Hudelson analyzed was teacher-assigned. That is, the teacher selected a topic, told the children to write on it, and used their compositions to evaluate their proficiency with written English. Both audience and purpose were the teacher's, not the writers'. Hudelson offers a couple of suggestions for these children's teachers: first, make the writing authentic; that is, have the children write to someone other than the teacher, to real audiences, and for their own purposes, and, second, offer the children a wide variety of opportunities to write. That variety would include a class newspaper; written conversations such as notes to classmates that pass back and forth; letters to each other, to the teacher, to people outside the school; a dialog journal; a diary; unassigned stories; songs and poems; science reports, and so on. If Vuong's classroom teacher saw his story about his camping trip, if she saw that he is already writing, she might be less likely to ask him to spend hours on dittoed drill sheets designed to prepare students to write. Urzúa's Researcher learned that all of the children she observed underwent terror in getting to the U.S.A., but she saw that it is Vuong who clearly is suffering still. There is no joy for Vuong in school, where he labors silently and alone over tiny details, nor is there any out of school, where his neatly sharpened pencils line up on his desk in the room next to the one in which his mother is dying. Perhaps Vuong's quiet, withdrawn suffering appears to be ineptitude at academic tasks to the teachers who don't know his history or his present situation. Rigg learned from Urzúa that Vuong had never been given a reading test; she assumes the reason is the boy's teachers have decided that he cannot read well enough to take it. Yet Vuong's RMI profile shows him reading The Wise Father with many fewer miscues than Khamla, who takes all the standard tests. More, Vuong has a respectable retelling score of 71 on that story. Rigg suspects that it is not Vuong's academic ability that determines his grade placement, or whether he is able to take the tests given to the other students in his class, but how that academic ability is perceived by his teachers. Gilmore (1985) points out that teachers' perceptions of students' attitudes rather than academic achievement may be the basis for tracking in the urban, racially mixed school that she studied; perhaps something similar is occuring in Vuong's school. Would Vuong's teachers look at him differently if Hudelson, Rigg and Urzúa shared with them what they have learned? We hope so.

What we have learned about research through this collaboration is much more far-reaching than what we've learned about four refugee children. We're learning what sorts of studies will tell us the most, will have the greatest implications for our knowledge about second language development.

## Integrated Approaches to Research and Teaching

The most important thing we've learned is that if we look at any aspect of language in isolation, such as writing or reading or speaking, we are missing something vital. We're missing the information that comes from considering language holistically. We know that our own writing is deeply affected by what we read, what we hear, and what we talk about; similarly, our conversations are always colored by what we're currently writing and reading. We've learned the same is true for children learning ESL.

Here is one example, a lengthy one, of a teacher integrating all of the language processes – writing, listening, reading, and speaking – as she responds to her students' interests. One day many of the Hispanic students arrived in an ESL class breathless with excitement; many of them had friends and relatives in Mexico where an enormous earthquake had just occurred. The ESL teacher used that interest and excitement. She let the students talk and listen to each other. She had the students write news bulletins about the ongoing developments as the earthquake's effects continued to unfold, and to read the news bulletins to the rest of the class and post them on the class bulletin board. She encouraged the students to listen to radio and TV reports of the earthquake's devastation, and to read and bring in newspaper articles on the topic; some students summarized in writing what they had heard or read, and shared that with the other "reporters" in the class as they prepared the day's news bulletin. She asked the librarian to help her by finding films and filmstrips on earthquakes, and reading material about earthquakes, both fictional and factual, that she could take back into her room for the children to look at during sustained silent reading. Some of the children wrote small poems, prayers for a boy their age buried in the rubble deep beneath the rescue team. A few of the children wrote to Placido Domingo expressing sympathy at his loss, after seeing him plead for help on their televisions. The teacher and the children tried to find a local expert on earthquakes – a geologist or seismologist – to ask why and where earthquakes occur. They tried to find city government officials who could tell them about emergency procedures in case of a city-wide disaster in their own town. Every use of reading, listening, writing, and speaking came out of the children's purposes as they used language communicatively. That important event in the students' lives became the language arts curriculum for three weeks, and all of the language processes were integrated, just as were the content areas of language arts, social studies, and science.

The teacher who accomplished this is also, of course, a researcher, a classroom researcher. She watches her students and she listens to them. She integrates her research and her teaching so that each

informs the other. Here are a few ways in which she does this.

To find out what and how well her students are reading, this teacher first loads the classroom with a variety of reading materials, from comics to an encyclopedia. Because some of her students are Southeast Asians she has, in addition to standard English folk and fairy tales, Vietnamese stories like those in *The Brocade Slipper* (Dyer Vuong, 1982), and for her Hispanic students materials with English versions of traditional tales from different Hispanic nations. With the help of her school and public librarians, she gets books, magazines, newspapers, slide shows, movies, and exhibits selected according to the interests of her students and to the requirements of the curriculum. *Ranger Rick* magazine and Owl (from Canada) are favorites. She has each child keep a learning log. Each day the students note in that log what they are reading by jotting down the title and pages read, their response, and how that reading relates to their other reading and to class activities or assignments. Even the most beginning students of the language can do the first part of this, since they can more or less copy the title and the page numbers directly from the book, magazine, or newspaper that they were reading. They can indicate response with a check, plus, or minus sign. This sort of record lets her know what her students are reading and, to some extent, how well. She also uses pair work with reading and speaking. For example, she offers pairs of students a few volumes of Bantam's *Choose Your Own Adventure* series, and lets each pair pick the one story that both will read. That series asks the reader to choose between two alternatives on every page or two. The pairs read together, discussing why they should choose one alternative over the other, then turn to the page they've selected and read it silently, after which they discuss the next option. Such a procedure lets the students share their predicting and confirming strategies with large chunks of meaning, and it lets the eavesdropping teacher learn some of the thinking that guides each student's reading. It also gives her information on her students' individual progress in expressing their ideas orally.

This teacher also observes and records how well her students are communicating and comprehending oral language. She creates opportunities for her students to listen to and to practice oral language in a variety of settings, including the pair activities just described, participating in full group discussions, giving reports and sharing before the class, working on small group projects and at small group learning centers, and having individual conferences with her about their schoolwork. Like most teachers, she does more than one thing at a time by carefully listening to how her students are using language within these settings as she instructs and supports them. This teacher also follows her students outside her classroom, to watch and listen to them in other

settings in the cafeteria, on the playground, in their other classes. She takes note of the kinds of language her students are using when they talk with different people on different topics in different settings. She discovers in what contexts her students seem the most confident and most comfortable. She then uses the information she has gained from her observations to plan her future instruction.

This teacher uses similar techniques in keeping track of how well her students are writing. She looks at a variety of compositions, all written for the students' own purposes to different audiences, and when she looks at papers that were not written to her for her evaluation, she doesn't mark them up. She tries to have a class newspaper, so that every author in her room can be published. And, of course, newspapers offer a wide variety of styles and a chance for those who are just now beginning English to write at least a line or two, such as a brief weather report, *Sunny, 75 °*, and to illustrate or draw comics.

She keeps a variety of ongoing records, such as the dialog journals, language samples, observations she's noted down, and of course all the records that the students themselves keep, such as their learning logs. She keeps all these records for three reasons. The first is that different sorts of records over time are the best information she has when she needs to make an instructional decision; the second is that these records show the student and the student's parents what sorts of progress is occurring; the third is that she needs evidence that will satisfy her school's and her community's requirements. It is unfortunate, as Cazden points out, that more and more schools and communities have reductionist concepts of language and learning; this often results in using standardized tests as the major (or even the only) means of evaluation. The teacher who keeps ongoing records of the sorts just mentioned can be the advocate for children that Cazden pleads for, because that teacher can show the administration and community immeasurably more about the students than any test can, and by doing so, can help reduce the emphasis placed on standardized tests.

The teacher who used her students' excitement over the Mexican earthquake so well tries to visit the homes and communities of her students, as Urzúa's Researcher did; she talks with her students' parents, siblings, and other teachers. Although this particular teacher has not read Heath's *Ways With Words* (1983), she is using many of its ideas, particularly in her recognition that her students' home community has immeasurable effects on her students' academic accomplishments. She listens to her students a lot, learning from them not only how well they are coping with academic demands in this new language, but also as much as she can learn of where they came from, what they remember, what they regret; she frequently quotes the saying "You

don't know where you're going if you don't know where you've been." She also pays attention to the future, and continually lets the children know in little ways that she expects them to do well in school and in the world. For example, when a child does well with a tough arithmetic problem, instead of drawing a smiling cartoon face on the child's paper, she'll say "You got this tough one right; maybe you'll study physics or math in college and become a famous physicist."

This gifted teacher asks her students what their perceptions are of different situations. "Why do you think we're doing this?" is a frequent question. She constantly checks because she knows that her perspective is not her students', and she knows that each person's perception of a situation determines what that situation is for that person. Like Urzúa's gifted researcher, she recognizes that context is all-important in getting information and she knows that context means much more than the physical setting; it includes too the social and psychological settings, the perceptions the individual has of the situation and of the self. Her students' perceptions of contexts affect the plans she makes for their class.

An integrated approach to research is like this teacher's approach to teaching, using everything, as Molly put it. An integrated approach to research can mean combining the special expertise of different people, as it does in the unit by Hudelson, Rigg and Urzúa in this volume. It can also mean researchers and teachers working together, learning from each other, as Cazden did from her students, as Enright did from Molly, as Urzúa's Researcher did from the Wise Teacher, and as Urzúa, Hudelson and Rigg did from each other and from the four children. Often the researcher and teacher are the same person; Molly and the gifted teacher mentioned in this chapter are examples. When they are separate people, they still can and should work together. The researcher can be a friend in the classroom to the teacher, bringing a perspective that allows the researcher to observe what the teacher missed, as in Vuong's case. The teacher is an invaluable source of information to the researcher, because the classroom teacher's perspective allows her to see a great deal that a university-based researcher, at least, misses. Certainly, we can learn from our gifted teacher to check on the perceptions of the people who help with our research, our research subjects. Rigg's report on the reading of four Southeast Asian children, for example, could use some indication of the children's perspective on the reading and retelling tasks they were asked to perform. No one asked them, "Why do you think you're doing this? Why do you think you are being asked to read aloud; to be tape recorded while you do?" We don't know what the children's perceptions of the data-collection process were. If schoolchildren think that they are being tested, they often tense up and try to read with

great accuracy; did that happen with Khamla and the other three? How do research subjects perceive their tasks? What effects do those perceptions have on the results? Researchers seldom ask those questions. We are suggesting that they should, as much as possible.

The more information we can get about what we're studying, the better. We have demonstrated in this volume that one way to get that information is to integrate into our research the perspectives of others – of other researchers, of teachers, of the language learners we study. We hope this volume is only an early sample of publications that integrate perspectives from language study, language teaching, and language development.

Pat Rigg
D. Scott Enright

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*"We are writing to classroom teachers, both mainstream and ESL, to those who educate classroom teachers, and to those who study teachers and children working together in the classroom."*

T E S O L



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